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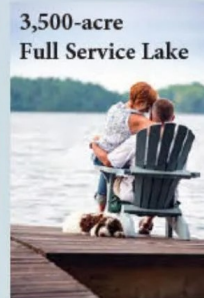
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# JULY

## FEATURES

33

### R • HEALTH

High-tech dentistry, pharmacy deserts, a new spa reunites beauty pros, our annual list of the area's Top Dentists and more

*By Mary Margaret Clouse, Nati Feliciano-Soto, Tharon Giddens, Alyssa Hutton and Kevin Johnson*

98

### 'TO BUILD A HAPPY PLACE'

Kings Dominion celebrates 50 years of fun

*By Dale M. Brumfield*

106

### NATIONAL POLICY, LOCAL IMPACT

Six months of federal executive orders hit home

*By Tharon Giddens, Mindy Kinsey, Harry Kollatz Jr., Mark Newton, Ian Stewart and Joan Tupponce*

112

### SNACK ATTACK

Richmond is a hot spot for viral food brands

*By Genevelyn Steele and Eileen Mellon*



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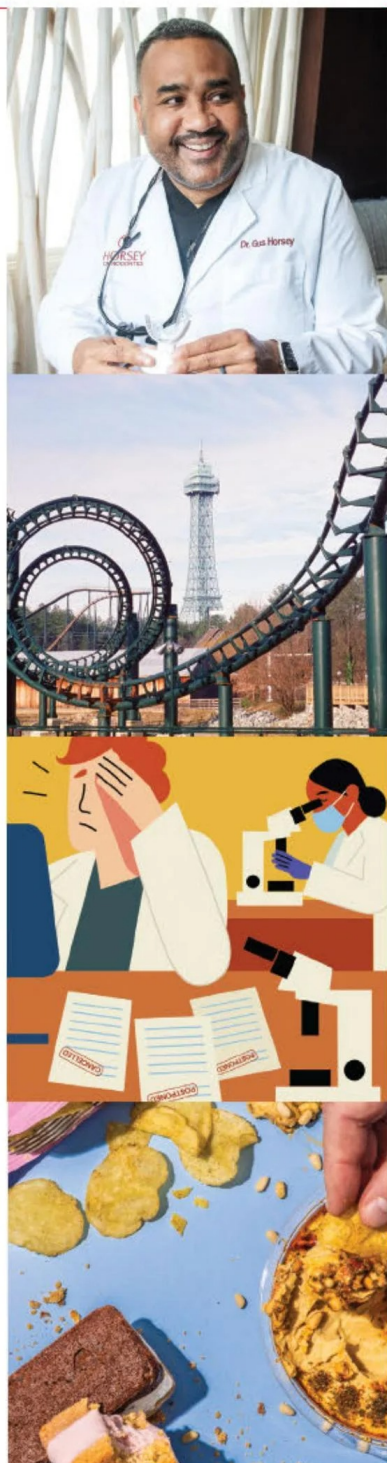


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FROM TOP: ASH DANIEL; COURTESY KINGS DOMINION; VICTORIA BORGES; JUSTIN CHESNEY







# DEPARTMENTS

## UPFRONT

- 12** From the Editor + Contributors
- 15** From the Publisher

## LOCAL

- 18 CATCH UP** A new water crisis and a vibe check
- 20 BUSINESS** Local biz seeks a greener food industry
- 22 Q&A** Jeff Schapiro steps back from the RTD
- 24 PETS** Chesterfield starts work on an expanded animal shelter
- 26 SPORTS** River City Promotions builds up boxing
- 30 FLASHBACK** Revolutionary War hero Anna Maria Lane
- 136 PARTING SHOT** Celebrating school history in Varina

## A&E

- 74 DATEBOOK** New plays and exhibitions, dragon boats, a Georgia crooner and 804 Day
- 76 SPECIAL EVENTS** Four ways to celebrate the National Day of Rock 'n' Roll
- 77 HAPPENINGS** 21 things to do this month
- 78 PROFILE** Carbon Leaf plays Maymont
- 80 SPOTLIGHT** Creative Minds Publications celebrates 20 years
- 82 PROFILE** The Head and the Heart's new album

## LIVING

- 86 STYLE** Fashion gives back at Wear RVA
- 88 GIVING BACK** Edible education in the 6th District
- 90 TRY THIS** Get floored at Rug & Roll
- 92 TRAVEL** Seeing Roanoke's side streets
- 94 FAMILY** Getting boys back on track

## EAT & DRINK

- 120 IN DEPTH** Origins of the Orange Crush
- 122 AROUND TOWN** Best bites, food events and Palani Drive
- 124 SPOTLIGHT** Lakeside's pint-sized gelato shop
- 126 RECIPE** A signature dish with a summer twist
- 128 Q&A** Fresh catches at Tuckahoe Seafood
- 130 SHORT ORDER** Clams, crackers and sangria are summer staples
- 132 INSIDER** The pickle queen of Richmond

## CORRECTIONS

In "Too Fast, Too Furious" (May 2025), we mistakenly omitted the second number comparing a change in speed limit; in the school zone at the 3800 block of Chamberlayne Avenue, the speed limit slows from 35 to 25 mph.



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from the  
**EDITOR**  
MINDY KINSEY



# SAVORING SUMMER

**Y**ou know you live in a food-centric city when even the packaged products are uncommonly good. I first stumbled across RVA chef Keya Wingfield's Bombay Spice potato chips several years ago at a local market. I have no problem admitting that I savored the whole bag in one sitting and haunted the store looking for more.

And I was far from the only fan — Richmonders purchased the chips so fast that Wingfield was able to scale up her capacity and launch the product nationwide. Keya's Snacks is part of a growing sector of munchie manufacturers around the region; meet a few more and learn what's luring national brands to the River City beginning on Page 112.

We are lucky to number among our freelance writers a former employee of Kings Dominion, Dale Brumfield. To mark the amusement park's 50th anniversary, Brumfield shares memories and behind-the-scenes stories of its development and growth into one of the region's top attractions and one of the country's coolest places to ride roller coasters (P. 98).

In the summer issue of R•Health, beginning on Page 33, we're exploring new technology that's making dental visits more comfortable and effective — and less gloppy — than ever before. We also examine the factors causing, and suggestions for curing, pharmacy deserts across the commonwealth; check in with beauty pros who have reunited in a new business; and present our annual list of the area's Top Dentists.

I use the word "local" a lot, so it may come as a surprise that we're covering national politics in these pages. I'd usually argue that city and state actions outweigh Washington in their impact on citizens' daily lives. However, we've found that the flood of new policies coming from the federal government over the past six months has had an outsized effect on individuals here at home that merits coverage (P. 106).

Also in this issue, we share a well-known reporter's retirement, album launches and appearances from two local bands, a book publisher's anniversary project, over 30 things to do, an Indian take on fried green tomatoes, and much more. Enjoy! **R**

## CONTRIBUTORS



### Dale M. Brumfield

A Richmond journalist and the author of 12 books, Dale M. Brumfield is a criminal justice reform advocate and helped lead the charge in 2021 to abolish the death penalty in Virginia. A former Kings Dominion employee, Brumfield wrote this issue's feature on the theme park's 50th anniversary (P. 98).



### Abigail Giuseppe

A designer and illustrator based in Richmond, Abigail Giuseppe's clients include The Criterion Collection, The Los Angeles Times, Entertainment Weekly, The Bitter Southerner and more. When she isn't drawing or painting, she can be found at local film screenings or the nearest coffee shop. Giuseppe provided the Spotlight illustration on Page 124.



### Carson McNamara

An editorial illustrator and lifelong Richmonder, Carson McNamara has worked with publications like NPR, The Washington Post and Matador Records, but her favorite clients are the ones close to home. McNamara provided the illustrations in R•Health for this issue (P. 33).



### Genevelyn Steele

Genevelyn Steele began reporting during a fourth-grade field trip to Colonial Williamsburg, which became her first published article. She's written about food, travel and leisure for Richmond magazine since 2012, receiving numerous Virginia Press Association awards. Steele wrote the food feature on Richmond-made snacks (P. 112) and was most intrigued by discovering the safeguards around mass-producing the perfect bite.





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from the  
**PUBLISHER**  
RICHARD MALKMAN



# THE FIFTH FOOD GROUP

**I**t's summer — time for outdoor grilling, sleeping under the stars, fireworks and ice cream. From the look of our cover, maybe I should have named ice cream first. It may be available year-round, but it's best in the summer.

When I was a kid growing up in the Bronx, ice cream was my go-to food source. During the summer, my dad would wake my sisters and me after bedtime and pile us in the back of the station wagon in our pajamas to take us for ice cream at the Carvel shop up the street. This was a real treat for us, because we were eating our favorite ice cream while half-asleep. Sometimes I didn't even remember having gone out when I woke up the next morning with black cherry ice cream on my pajamas.

For me, Carvel visits were all about the toppings. Just having black cherry ice cream on my cone wasn't enough — I needed a pound of chocolate sprinkles on it, too. Sometimes I covered the chocolate sprinkles with rainbow sprinkles, and occasionally I added a little hot fudge on top of it all. It's amazing I made it through childhood without developing diabetes.

As if the Carvel visits weren't enough, my next-door neighbor owned a Mister

Softee truck — the kind that drove around the neighborhood with that distinctive jingle playing loudly over a speaker. We kids could hear it for miles, and it sent us running to our moms' purses for loose change. I especially loved the Mister Softee soft serve, so if Mom had enough change in her purse, I would go for a banana split with extra cherries on top.

We did not lack for ice cream choices. The Good Humor man was also a regular on our street, offering ice cream

delights such as the Strawberry Shortcake bar, Toasted Almond and Creamsicle, all on sticks. The kids on my block would drop anything for a chance to have a Good Humor treat.

If you missed the Good Humor truck, there was always the Bungalow Bar truck. He didn't have a special song to play, just

a bell to ring. When we heard the bell, we would stop eating dinner and rush outside for dessert. I remember hearing my friends' parents yelling at them to stay and finish eating or there would be no dessert. That never made sense to us — our philosophy was that we would eat supper after we ate ice cream.

The treat trucks battled all summer long on my street, and the children went to bed very happy. **R**

“  
**Our philosophy  
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# LOCAL



Jimmy Jenkins-Rash,  
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ASH DANIEL

A city company combats  
single-use food products **P. 20**

RTD's Jeff  
Schapiro on  
retiring **P. 22**

New digs for Chesterfield's  
cats, dogs and beyond **P. 24**

Boxing promoters put  
Richmond in the ring **P. 26**

Flashback: Revealing the past of a  
Revolutionary War heroine **P. 30**

Edited by MARK NEWTON



## CATCH UP

# CRISIS AFTER CRISIS

Richmond's water system fails again despite January's lessons

**A**fter "Water Crisis 2: Electric Boogaloo" forced Richmond residents and businesses to boil water for three days in late May, it appears Mayor Danny Avula has a lot more work to do than he thought on Election Day.

Avula, a former Henrico County health official, has already looked to his old stomping grounds for help. He has hired its deputy county manager for administration, Brandon Hinton, to temporarily serve as the city's deputy chief administrator for finance and administration as leaders clean up a series of bad checks and purchasing card abuse. Avula also picked Odie Donald II, chief of staff to Atlanta's mayor, to be his new chief administrative officer.

But the city's second water crisis of

the year (not to overlook the extra fluoride found in April) shows that a changing of the guard alone isn't sufficient. Officials pointed to delayed maintenance as one of the main reasons the city's filtration clogged and polluted drinking water sourced from two city tanks. On the same day the boil advisory was lifted, May 29, a water main broke at Seventh and Canal streets, causing low pressure in Henrico due to the county's connection to the city water system.

"We know that we are an old city with old infrastructure and that we are going through a period of pretty rapid change in terms of people, in terms of systems and processes, and that is going to come with some bumps in the road," Avula said May 29, later noting that the work will take years. "I'm really grateful for [Department of Public Works Director Scott]



Morris' efforts to not only bring in new staff, to build up a new team, but also to address a lot of the long-standing issues with systems and processes."

Henrico, which in February floated the idea of buying the water plant outright, made its feelings clear in April: "This episode ... shows once again that the region's localities need to play a more prominent role in the delivery of drinking water to their customers."

—Mark Newton

FROM LEFT: COURTESY SHAHEEN RUTH MARTIN & FONVILLE; ADOBE STOCK

## VIBE CHECK



**\$2.05M**

The sale price of the home of former VCU men's basketball coach **Ryan Odom**, who is moving to the University of Virginia. The Cape Cod-style house at 3902 Sulgrave Road in the city's Windsor Farms neighborhood was built in 1941. It was sold a week after being listed.



**Richmond's ParkScore**, a ranking of 100 U.S. cities by the Trust for Public Lands, up from No. 22 last year. The report evaluates park systems on their amenities (the city received 92 points out of 100), equity (84), access (74), investment (64) and acreage (36).



**\$17,240**

**The cost of tuition and mandatory fees** for typical in-state undergraduate students at Virginia Commonwealth University during the 2025-26 academic year. The increase of \$520, or 2.5%, will help cover mandatory cost increases, inflation and strategic investments in programming, according to VCU.

**\$1.75**

**The new cost of full-price breakfasts** for Henrico County students starting this fall, up from \$1.50. HCPS says the increase is the first in nearly a decade. Student lunches are going up 10 cents to \$3, and meals for adults will cost more, too.





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## BUSINESS

# PLANTS OVER PLASTIC

RVA-based Terravive hopes to make the food industry greener

By Rachel Kester

**T**erravive has been on a mission for years to reduce the food industry's reliance on plastic, and its efforts are having noticeable effects.

The Richmond-based business, founded in 2015 by Julianna Keeling, creates over 100 types of single-use commercial food service products made with biodegradable materials. Recently, Terravive has been working on bags and film (similar to plastic wrap) for food packaging and pallet wrapping.

"We were founded with the mission to find a better alternative to single-use plastic and foam," Keeling says. "[We] utilize plant-based materials that break down and aren't going to pollute the environment."

Apart from Terravive's environmental priorities, one of its long-standing initiatives has been to offer 100% made-in-America products. The company uses sustainable domestic manufacturing and supply chains — a decision increasingly working in the company's favor amid a trade war.

"With what's going on in the world, we have an incredible amount of interest in our products, [especially because of] tariffs we're immune to," co-owner and Navy veteran Joe Swider says. "We have secure supply chains [in the U.S.]. We don't have to wait for products coming across the Pacific and [contribute to] pollution with shipping."

Typically formed with petroleum-based materials, plastic has become a cost-effective solution for the food service industry, which often provides



customers with foam containers and plastic straws, plates and takeaway bags. According to a 2021 report by the nonprofit Upstream, 1 trillion pieces of single-use food service waste are generated yearly in the U.S. alone. Plastic can eventually break into microplastics and leak chemicals, like BPA (bisphenol A, a notorious endocrine disruptor) into waterways and soil, leading to serious health concerns for both humans and wildlife.

A 2021 Virginia law enacted bans on expanded polystyrene food service containers for some food vendors to take effect on July 1, 2023, and for all vendors on July 1, 2025. In

2022, the blanket ban was extended to 2028, but the updated state budget sets the two start dates to July 1 this year and in 2026, respectively.

Terravive's products are composed of various plant substances, like upcycled sugarcane for its brown products. "We take the excess fibrous crop and turn that into products and stuff that

would have been burned and disregarded," Keeling says. Corn-based materials are also used to make clear items like cutlery. While decomposition varies depending on the local climate, the products ordinarily disappear within a few weeks once disposed of.

Keeling, who went to Godwin High School, was inspired to start Terravive when she began analyzing the enormous amount of garbage humans accumulate. After attending Washington and Lee University and spending time in San Francisco learning how to build a business, she returned to Richmond and participated in Lighthouse Network's incubator program. There, she met Swider, who joined Terravive in 2019. Today, the woman-, minority- and veteran-owned business's products can be found across the U.S. and four continents.

"For people who are trying to get plastic out of their supply chains or customers concerned about [eating off of] plastic and Styrofoam, it makes sense to [use Terravive products]," Keeling says. "We're trying to be the most sustainable company we can be." ■



Terravive co-owners  
Joe Swider and  
Julianna Keeling



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Q&amp;A

# HANGING UP THE BOW TIE

Political observer Jeff Schapiro steps back after a decades-long run at the RTD

By Chris Suarez

**W**ith merely a note affixed to the end of his final column, the legendary Richmond Times-Dispatch writer Jeff Schapiro announced his retirement from the city's newspaper of record in May.

He delivered his final bulletin in classic Schapiro fashion, reviving tales from Virginia's vaunted history as the birthplace of America and connecting the past to the present. With a looming high-stakes election this fall in which Virginians will elect the commonwealth's first female governor and potentially presage the outcome of congressional midterm elections next year, Schapiro plans to remain plugged in as a part-time political analyst with Radio IQ.



Jeff Schapiro

**Richmond magazine:** Why did you bury the lede about your retirement in your last column?

**Jeff Schapiro:** What we do in the news business is tell stories. The story is important. The storyteller is not important. And I wanted to leave as quietly as I arrived.

**RM:** It's only been three weeks as of the time of this interview, but how's retirement going so far?

**Schapiro:** I have been remarkably busy. I'm desperately embarrassed by this, but I've received an overwhelming number of emails, texts and phone calls from readers, colleagues and competitors, former and present. I affix an asterisk to that because I still am keeping an eye on things through this part-time side hustle with Radio IQ, which has been going on for some years now.

I'm responding incrementally to these emails. I have no intention of just simply typing a "thank you" and hitting send. So much of the correspondence I've received has been very personal, and I'm moved by that. My attitude has always been that if people go to the trouble of preparing something thoughtful, I am duty-bound to return that compliment. I've really just been stunned by that, and some of these readers are recalling things that I had written some years ago.

**RM:** You've been one of the most recognizable columnists at the RTD with your signature eyeglasses and penchant for bow ties. What inspires your sense of fashion?

**Schapiro:** I guess I would confess to a certain measure of vanity. My maternal grandfather, and my father on occasion, would quote Arnold Gingrich, a co-founder of Esquire magazine who, in counseling men on how to turn themselves out, said: "Dress British, think Yiddish." So, to some degree, I would say the spirit of that flourish drives what you see.

Now, I do think this is important, and I recognize that times have changed, but as a reporter who covered state government and politics at their intersection of the corporate and professional world, my feeling is you should dress like the people you cover.

**RM:** What's your take on the governor's race this year?

**Schapiro:** Abigail Spanberger, the Democratic nominee, is clearly anticipating that hostility for President Donald Trump is going to drive a large number of votes her way. Winsome Earle-Sears, as the Republican nominee, will have something of a balancing act in that. On one hand, she needs all of the Republican votes she can get. A good number of those votes will be determined by not just a Republican reflex, but to some degree, loyalty to Trump. And note that she has distinguished herself, as Trump might see it, as disloyal. But in a state like Virginia, where independent voters tend to decide elections, she's going to have to come up with some way to appeal to that slice of the electorate.

**RM:** How would you describe the evolution of Virginia politics over the past half-century?

**Schapiro:** Virginia is a state with about a dozen jurisdictions with populations of roughly 200,000 to north of a million. If a candidate carries those places, then there aren't enough votes in the rest of the state for the other side to catch up.

The majority of people who live here are non-natives, present company included. They bring with them certain attitudes, habits and tendencies. When I moved to Richmond in 1979, Virginians for the most part were white or Black, with only a narrow band of Native Americans. Fast forward to the last census in 2021: The Black population is largely unchanged at 19%, while the Asian and Hispanic populations are roughly 11% and 12%, respectively.

Even with all this money and newcomers pouring in, Virginia was still a rural state for most of the 20th century. Two-thirds of the people who lived in Virginia were in the countryside. So, in a lifetime, it's completely flipped. It's a very different place.

Our demographic diversity is also contributing to the nationalization of our politics. What the nation is grappling with will have a profound effect on the decisions made regarding representation at the state level. **A**

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity. Chris Suarez and Jeff Schapiro were previously coworkers at the Richmond Times-Dispatch.*



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PETS

# ANIMAL HOUSE

Chesterfield starts work on a bigger and better shelter

By Mark Newton

**A** new animal shelter in Chesterfield County on track to be completed next fall will help more animals in Central Virginia find their forever homes.

In May, the county broke ground on the 30,990-square-foot structure, which is three times larger than the existing building (built in 1975) that it is replacing. In addition to a full veterinary and surgical center, the \$17.8 million shelter at 9531 Government Center Parkway will boast 134 dog runs.

While that's nine fewer than the current building has, they won't be double-stacked, meaning more big dogs can be accommodated. The number of cat cages will more than double from 55 to 120, and an exotics room will house reptiles, rabbits and more.

"We [will] utilize things like natural lighting, high ceilings, very animal-

friendly housing structures; it's going to be much brighter [and] colorful," says Lt. Carrie Jones, animal services manager for the Chesterfield County Police Department.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the shelter has seen a significant increase in its animal populations, according to the county's fiscal year 2025 budget, which sets money aside to hire more kennel masters. Virginia's animal rescues and shelters saw 105,676 cats and dogs adopted in 2023, according to a 2025 commending resolution by the General Assembly.

"When we designed this facility, we really kept the comfort of the animals in mind. So, if we needed to cut space somewhere, it's the office areas" that were downsized, Jones says. "My main focus was to make sure that the animals are comfortable. We get to go home at the end of the day; they don't." **R**

## METRO RICHMOND ANIMAL SHELTERS

Each city and county in the Richmond area operates an animal shelter. Since their hours and days of operation vary and appointments may be required, it's worth reaching out before visiting.

### Charles City County Animal Shelter

12001 Munford Road, Charles City  
804-829-6476

[charlescityva.us/190/animal-control](http://charlescityva.us/190/animal-control)

### Chesterfield County Animal Shelter

9300 Public Works Road, Chesterfield  
804-748-1683

[chesterfield.gov/450/adopt-a-pet](http://chesterfield.gov/450/adopt-a-pet)

### Colonial Heights Animal Shelter

301 Charles Dimmock Parkway, Colonial Heights  
804-520-9397

[colonialheightsva.gov/295/animal-control-shelter](http://colonialheightsva.gov/295/animal-control-shelter)

### Goochland County Animal Shelter and Adoption Center

1900 Hidden Rock Lane, Maidens  
804-556-5302

[goochlandva.us/299/animal-protection](http://goochlandva.us/299/animal-protection)

### Hanover Animal Control & Shelter

12471 Taylor Complex Lane, Ashland  
804-365-6485

[www.hanovercounty.gov/173/adopt-a-pet](http://www.hanovercounty.gov/173/adopt-a-pet)

### Henrico County Animal Protection and Shelter

10421 Woodman Road, Glen Allen  
804-727-8807

[henrico.us/police/animal-protection-unit](http://henrico.us/police/animal-protection-unit)

### Hopewell City Animal Control and Public Animal Shelter

507 Station St., Hopewell  
804-541-2204

[hopewellva.gov/350/animal-services-unit](http://hopewellva.gov/350/animal-services-unit)

### Louisa County Animal Shelter

18 Sacred Heart Ave., Mineral  
540-894-4219

[louisacounty.gov/158/animal-shelter](http://louisacounty.gov/158/animal-shelter)

### New Kent County Animal Shelter

6301 Olivet Church Road, Providence Forge  
804-966-9500

[newkentva.animalservices.website](http://newkentva.animalservices.website)

### Petersburg Animal Care and Control

1600 Johnson Road, Petersburg  
804-732-3654

[petersburgva.gov/177/animal-control](http://petersburgva.gov/177/animal-control)

### Powhatan County Animal Control and Public Animal Shelter

4000 Old Plantation Road, Powhatan  
804-598-5672

[powhatanva.gov/193/adoptions](http://powhatanva.gov/193/adoptions)

### Richmond Animal Care and Control (RACC)

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804-646-5573

[rva.gov/animal-care-control](http://rva.gov/animal-care-control); [raccfoundation.org](http://raccfoundation.org)





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## SPORTS

# KO IN RVA

River City Promotions builds boxing locally and beyond

By D. Hunter Reardon

**B**eneath dozens of green-and-white championship banners, with spotlights punching their way through a haze of cigar smoke, Tyrell Boyd ducks and weaves, avoiding the nasty right hand of his opponent, Derrick Vann. Boyd (then 14-0-0) is a southpaw (lefty); Vann is orthodox (righty). Boyd wears yellow gloves; Vann wears black. Boyd is strong and smooth, but Vann is longer, and his right hand is reaching Boyd's face.

After repeatedly slipping and rolling away from Vann's jab, Boyd begins to look tired, but he also begins to land hooks of his own. In the fifth round, he sends Vann to the mat, but Vann forces himself to stand up.

"Let's hear it for this gentleman getting back on his feet," shouts the ring-side announcer.

The scene, evoking a night at Boston



Tyrell Boyd (left) and Derrick Vann box at Benedictine College Preparatory's 15th Annual Boxing Smoker on March 8.

Garden in the 1970s, actually took place March 8, 2025, at Benedictine College Preparatory's 15th Annual Boxing Smoker.

Held at the Goochland County school's McMurtrie-Reynolds Pavilion, the fundraiser for Benedictine supporters ages 21 and up, was in large part organized by River City Promotions. Since its founding in March 2022, the local boxing promoter

has put on seven events around the region. Co-founder Eric Ash is clear on his goals for the future.

"We're not just doing this to be based in Richmond," Ash says. "We are doing this to be an international powerhouse."

If Ash's goals seem ambitious, he says he's been told that before.

He also owns Vintage Boxing, one of the premiere gymnasiums for the sport in the metro Richmond area. The company has risen to that lofty status in less than 10 years. His business partner, Liz Cane, is the CEO of River City Promotions, and she is the state's only female boxing promoter.

Cane's background is in advising small businesses. She found a new appreciation for boxing after getting to know Ash.

"I grew up watching boxing with my dad," Cane says. "I thought I understood it. When I met Eric, I realized this is way more complex than I thought it was."

Ash grew up fighting at West Side Boxing Club in Mechanicsville, and >



River City Promotions' Eric Ash and Liz Cane with fighter Tyrell Boyd



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&lt; KO IN RVA | CONT'D FROM P. 26

he was later the captain of the club boxing team at Virginia Military Institute. After graduating, he secured a license to fight professionally, but he never got the chance.

"I got frustrated with it," he says. "There wasn't any management or guidance prevalent here in Richmond."

The experience prepared him for scouting young boxing prospects. Now, Vintage Boxing and River City Promotions serve as a hub for boxers who want to be a part of amateur or professional bouts.

"Eric does the matchmaking at our events because he knows the fighters," Cane says. "He's the visionary, and I'm the implementer. I find the pieces, the people, the places, to make it happen."

Ash's work to build River City Promotions has taken him to Colombia, Italy, Saudi Arabia and beyond. "Every time we go overseas, we're scouting, trying to contract people," Ash says. He

“  
**We're not just doing this  
to be based in Richmond.  
We are doing this to  
be an international  
powerhouse.”**

—Eric Ash,  
River City Promotions co-founder

will also sometimes help fighters sign with other promoters and rely on that connection to bring them in for a River City Promotions fight.

He tries to offer guidance that was lacking from his own professional path, which started 25 years ago.

"These boxers, they've always got somebody in their ear," he says. "They think there's a whole lot of money in it,

but when you first start out, there's not. You have to invest in yourself."

The industry, Cane adds, is notoriously corrupt: full of side deals, backroom negotiations and mind games.

"We're trying to change the sport for the better," she says. "We like to do clean business, and we try to do business with good people."

At the McMurtrie-Reynolds Pavilion, Boyd finally knocked Vann to the mat for good in the seventh round. The crowd erupted, and Boyd moved to 15-0-0 as a professional fighter.

"Everyone was pleased. I got a call from the head of school telling me we did a great job," Ash says. "It was a good card with some great fights."

The next sanctioned bouts for River City Promotions are set for Sept. 19 at Main Street Station in Shockoe Bottom.

"Richmond has historically not been a boxing city," Ash says, "but boxing is on fire right now." ■

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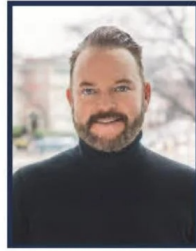
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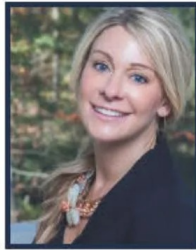
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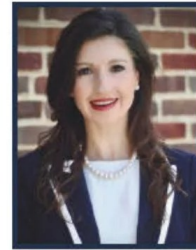
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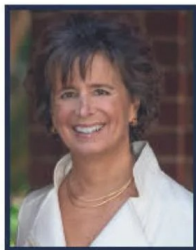
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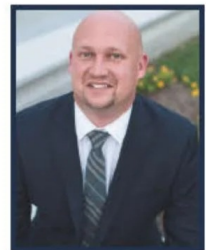
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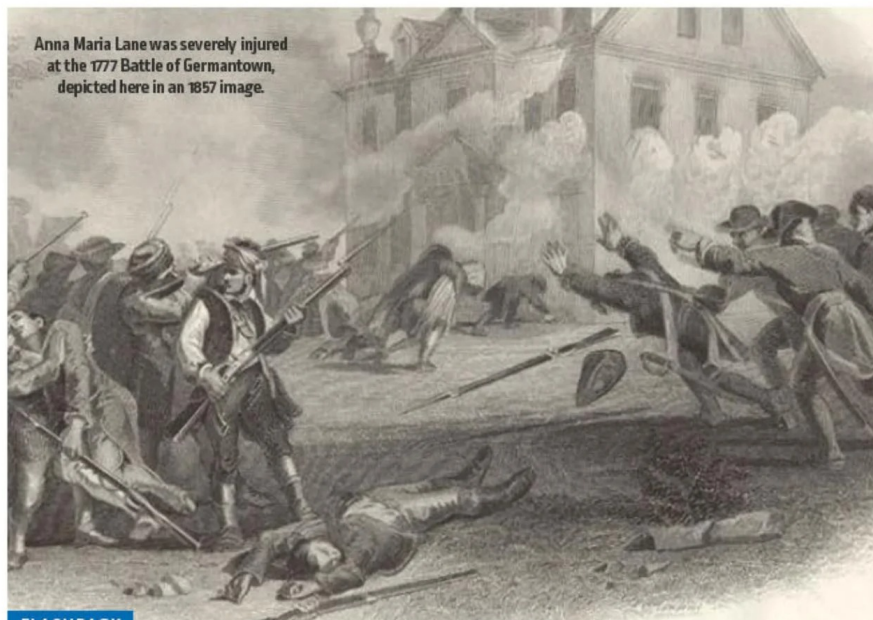






BY HARRY KOLLATZ JR.

Anna Maria Lane was severely injured at the 1777 Battle of Germantown, depicted here in an 1857 image.



FLASHBACK

## 'Extraordinary Military Services'

Anna Maria Lane fought alongside her husband in the Revolution

**I**n the May 1928 issue of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce's Richmond Magazine, the publication's editor, John Archer Carter, offered a \$30 award (\$560 today) for a facts-only essay about Anna Maria Lane.

"Listen, you debunkers," Carter challenged readers. "Here is a heroine, or this writer knows naught of heroism. The story which shortly follows is based entirely on yellow papers in the archives of the Virginia State Library. It is shockingly lacking in data. But no false festoonery, no romantic glamor of untruth is wanted."

While researching pensions granted by the federal and state governments to Revolutionary-era veterans, Carter dis-

covered a roster compiled by Lt. Peter Crutchfield, "A List of Noncommissioned Officers & Privates, discharged by act of Assembly from the service of the public guard in Richmond Jan. 1808."

Crutchfield notes of Lane's husband, John: "Served in the Revolutionary War from 1779 till its termination — then at Point of Fork [the state arsenal then in Columbia in Fluvanna County] during the whole of the Establishment there, & transferred to the Public Guard. His wife wounded in the Revolutionary War in which she served as a soldier. From this wound she has not recovered."

Editor Carter didn't receive any essays, but he wrote a piece for the Daughters of the American Revolution's magazine.

In 1978, archivist E.M. Sanchez-

Saavedra, pursuing research for a compilation of Virginia's Revolutionary military units, came across her. While he found only tantalizing clues, he published his findings in the Richmond Literature and History Quarterly under the title "The Trooper Was A Lady."

In 1988, historian Sandra Gioia Treadway took up Anna Maria's story in the Virginia State Library and Archives publication Virginia Cavalcade. Treadway, like those before her, found in the state pension grants of 1808 that she received \$100 for life, two-and-a-half times greater than amounts given to other veterans. As the act of the General Assembly describes, this was because she, "in the revolutionary war, in the garb, and with the courage of the soldier, performed extraordinary military services, and received a severe wound at the battle of Germantown."

Poorly kept and missing records leave most of her life a mystery. Further, no account of her service by either a comrade or descendant is known to exist. And when she and John signed pension receipts, they marked with an "X," signifying illiteracy. But her military career can be partially reconstructed through her husband's own, as well as an 1819 account offered in petition for a federal pension.

John, probably born in New Hampshire in either 1726 or 1727, would have been around 50 years old when he joined the Continental Army in 1776. He had likely already married Anna Maria, born around 1735. They had a daughter, Sarah. Treadway explains that, "with no other means of support, she may have decided to camouflage her sex and enlist in her husband's unit," the Connecticut Line, commanded by Gen. Israel Putnam.

Many "women of the army" worked as cooks, seamstresses or laundresses due to the lack of organized personnel to conduct these duties. In August 1777, Gen. George Washington complained that they "are a clog upon every movement" and ordered only essential women to follow the troops. It's in this context that Anna



Maria puts on the uniform to serve as a frontline combatant.

Treadway posits that Anna Maria joined in September 1777 as part of 900 reinforcements for Washington, who wanted to attack the forces of British Gen. William Howe camped at Germantown, near Philadelphia.

Historian Harry M. Ward, in his book "For Virginia and For Independence," considers that by the Battle of Germantown the Lanes are brigaded in the Virginia Line. Like the morning fog that Washington's army entered on Oct. 4, 1777, what happened next is obscured. Anna Maria sustained a grievous wound during the battle that permanently disabled her. Ward points out that she could've fallen during the opening moves along the Schuylkill River, amid "friendly fire" with Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne's troops or while in a fighting retreat.

Either Anna Maria left the line after her secret was revealed during treatment (if it was indeed a secret), or she accompanied John when he joined Benjamin Lincoln's army in 1779. John was wounded and captured in October during the failed Franco-American siege of Savannah.

Following a prisoner exchange, John was then transferred into Maj. John Nelson's Light Dragoons. In 1782, he's assigned to Charles Dabney's Virginia State Legion and pulled garrison duty in Yorktown, Hampton and Richmond. Next year, after the legion disbanded, the Lanes went into the state guard based at Point of Fork. They remained there for 17 years. Anna Maria, living there with Sarah, did laundry and other chores for subsistence pay.

The armaments storage moves to Richmond in 1801 at the Virginia Manufactory of Arms, situated at the end of 5th Street between the canal and the river. The state guard followed, a group of 68 mostly old and invalid soldiers that includes Anna Maria and 75-year-old John. They are temporarily housed in the state penitentiary until rudimentary quarters are built near where the Bell Tower now stands in Capitol Square. John's assignments included cleaning and packaging weapons and painting artillery carriages.

Anna Maria volunteered as a nurse to the men under the Superintendent of Health Dr. John H. Foushee. He writes in January 1802 on her behalf to Gov. James Monroe that, "as the old woman is lame, and has discovered a disposition to assist the sick as far as she is able," she requests some "moderate compensation."

The governor and council approved the request and paid her a modest stipend. By 1804, Anna Maria's age and physical problems caused her to quit nursing. John's health isn't much better; he's put to sweeping floors but became too infirm even for that. The General Assembly then halved the Public Guard. John is among the discharged.

Most of these men are 30-year veterans but destitute. The next governor, William H. Cabell, appeals to Speaker of the House Hugh Nelson for



The application for a Shockoe Hill Cemetery headstone for John Lane mentions that his wife, Anna Maria, was a "heroine at Germantown."

pensions. Cabell also highlights Anna Maria, who is "also very infirm, having been disabled by a severe wound which she received while fighting as a common soldier, in one of our Revolutionary battles, from which she has never recovered and perhaps never will recover."

Treadway figures that a committee hears Anna Maria's case because the legislators somehow learn her full story. They decide on Feb. 6, 1808, to give John \$40 in quarterly installments for the rest of his life, and Anna Maria receives \$100. They both receive an immediate grant of \$40.

On June 13, 1810, at around age 75, Anna Maria died. Her final resting place is unknown.

John, barely able to survive without her income and despite assistance from his daughter and friends, spent his remaining days at the Richmond City Poorhouse on Shockoe Hill.

In 1818, Congress enacted a small allocation for Revolutionary War veterans. At age 93, and unable to walk, he lived four years after successfully filing for the pension. He died on July 14, 1823, and is buried in Shockoe Hill Cemetery, but the exact location isn't recorded.

In 1936, the DAR sponsored a marker in Shockoe to recognize John. On the application card's "Name" section, the spouse description "husband" is replaced by a handwritten "his wife," and typed afterward is "Anna Maria Lane heroine at Germantown." The humble stone, though, doesn't include her.

Inspired by Treadway's research, historian and author Marvin K. Heffner in 1988 started a considerable effort to memorialize Anna Maria's life.

On June 18, 1997, a state historic marker was dedicated in her name and placed by the Bell Tower where earlier stood the crude barracks of the state guard. ■



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FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF RICHMOND MAGAZINE

# R•HEALTH

Summer 2025

& beauty

## A PRESCRIBED PROBLEM

*Pharmacies face hurdles in Richmond and beyond*

P. 46



CARSON MCNAMARA

Healthy developments  
P. 41

High-tech dentistry hits the region  
P. 52

2025  
Top Dentists  
P. 55

A beauty renaissance in The Fan  
P. 70

Edited by KEVIN JOHNSON



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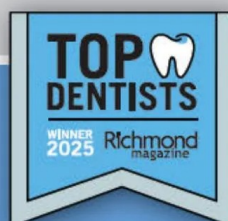


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## contents

### 41/ HEALTHY DEVELOPMENTS

Dental practices navigate new homes, drug overdose deaths on the decline and upcoming health care developments

### 46/ A PRESCRIBED PROBLEM

Researchers and pharmacists search for survival in pharmacy deserts

### 52/ SMART SMILES

Futuristic technology makes its mark on dentistry in Richmond

### 55/ TOP DENTISTS OF 2025

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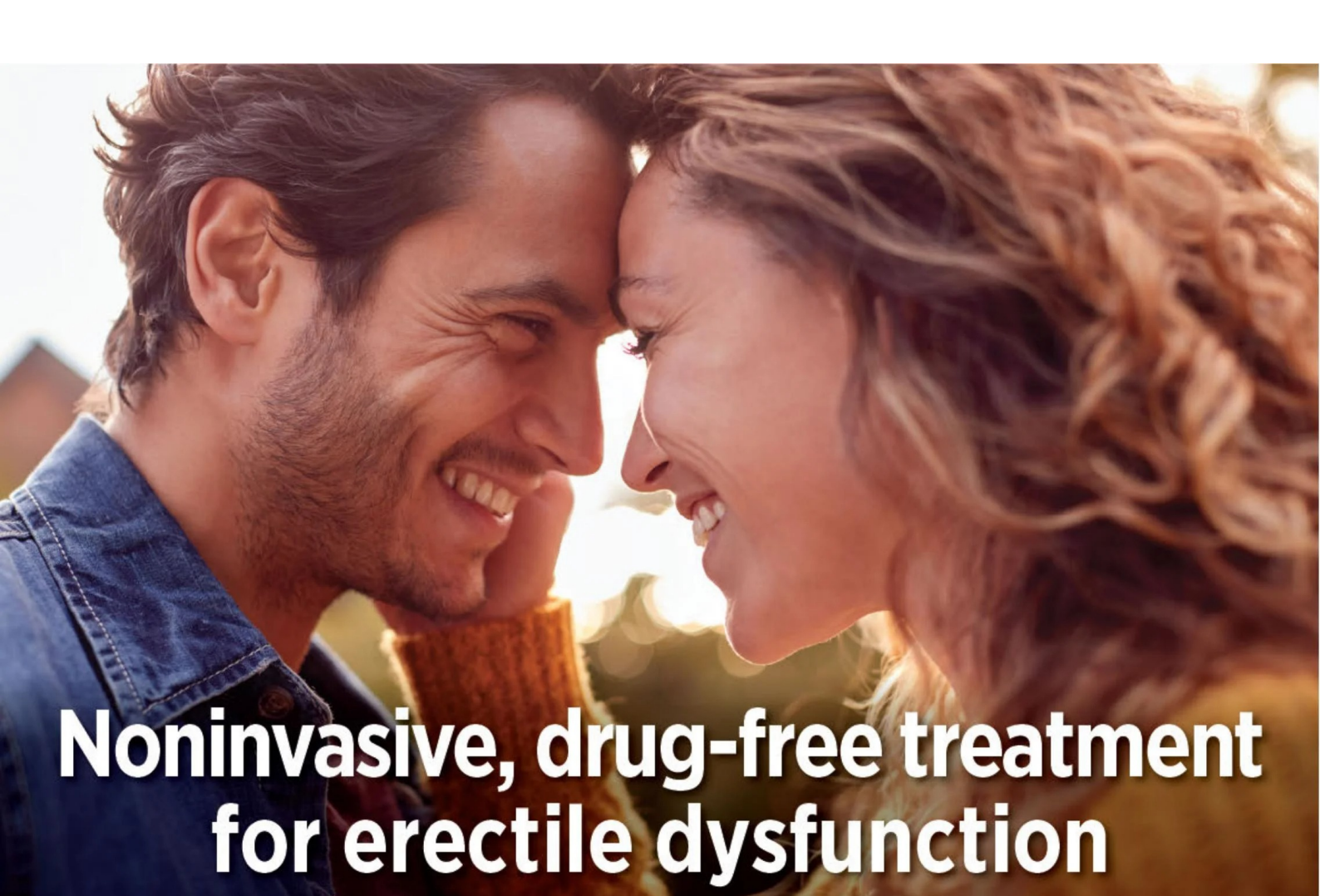
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# HEALTHY DEVELOPMENTS

*A West End fire impacts dentists, overdose deaths in Richmond decline, and new health care clinics appear on the horizon*



Dr. Kristin Edwards of West Richmond Family Dentistry

DENTISTRY

## Practice Progress

Richmond dentists find a way forward after a building fire

By Alyssa Hutton

**F**ollowing an office fire in mid-January, two West End dental practices are searching for new locations. West Richmond Family Dentistry and Endodontic Partners, both formerly at 5318 Patterson Ave., shared the building and have since been displaced, along with other businesses in the office park.

On the day of the fire, Dr. Kristin Edwards, an owner and dentist at West Richmond Family Dentistry, left the office not long after the fire started. After a friend alerted her to the blaze, Edwards and her husband drove back to the practice, only to see a cloud of black smoke above the building. "It's

kind of like when somebody tells you somebody's passed away. It's shock," Edwards says. "You just think, 'Everything I've worked for, it won't ever be the same.'"

In the weeks after the fire, Edwards launched a GoFundMe campaign to help pay staff and purchase new equipment, ultimately raising over \$36,000. "I think [my team] were surprised at how much, just the quantity of people that were helping," Edwards says.

Donations of dental supplies also poured in from the Richmond dental community. Edwards says the outpouring of support has helped to lift her up.

Dr. Sanjay Bhagchandani, co-owner of Endodontic Partners with his wife, Dr.

Trisha Krause, owns the building that caught fire on Patterson Avenue. After losing the practice, he has found the support from fellow dentists humbling. "People have reached out to us and they were like, 'I have this space, or these dental chairs, or I have whatever you need, you can borrow,'" Bhagchandani says.

In February, Edwards was able to rehome her practice to the offices of Capital Dental Design at 6947 Forest Ave., with space donated by owner and dentist Graham Forbes. Bhagchandani is currently operating out of an office at 5500 Monument Avenue, not far from the site of the fire.

Edwards is optimistic about a return to the location she's called home since 2020, aiming to reopen in the original office by the spring of 2026. "We have a great practice, a great team, great patients, I'm really proud of a lot of things," Edwards says. "So yes, we'll come back better, but I'm just happy to come back to the way that we were." ■



## PUBLIC HEALTH

# Curbing a Trend

Richmond's efforts to reduce overdose deaths show promise

By Mary Margaret Clouse

**L**ocally and across the U.S., a pandemic-era boom of drug overdose deaths may finally be receding. From December 2023 to December 2024, the number of predicted deaths in Virginia from overdoses decreased 38.5%, according to CDC data, which is a sharper decline than the U.S. average for the same period. In Richmond, deaths fell 64.9% from 2022 to 2024, according to preliminary data from the Virginia Department of Health.

There are numerous reasons for the dramatic shift, experts say. Access to naloxone, also known as Narcan; the implementation of harm reduction strategies such as fentanyl test strips and evidence-based treatment; and recovery services can all help to reduce overdose deaths. Over the years, these efforts have found success in communities across the country through education and policy changes.

In the city of Richmond, one group behind the turnaround is the substance use and prevention staff of the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, whose decades of education, prevention, and outpatient and residential treatment throughout the city have built a network of care now functioning to reduce deaths.

Decreasing overdose deaths relies on a three-pronged approach, according to Charlene Edwards, Prevention Services Manager at RBHA. Prevention, treatment and recovery are all essential to addressing substance use disorder. Her role focuses on providing resources, information and training to the community.

"We do a lot of education," Edwards says. "Currently, we are offering Mental Health First Aid for adults and for youth, and that's for the community at large, free of charge. And we also offer Revive."

Revive is Virginia's statewide opioid overdose and naloxone education program, which provides free online and

in-person training on how to recognize an opioid overdose and administer naloxone. Revive launched in Richmond in 2013, and more than a decade on, has conducted hundreds of sessions statewide each year for individuals and groups to learn about overdose prevention.

"We believe in collective impact," Edwards says. "We work with a lot of community groups, making sure youth have positive programs that they can go to. ... We work together with some of our other partners across the state where we look at policy issues and each year put forth policy issues that need to be addressed." Partner organizations, including nonprofits, health networks, civic associations and more help connect those in need with RBHA's resources in Richmond.

Outpatient care plays a major role in reducing overdose deaths, a fact that influenced the integrated care model of the Richmond Integrated Community Health Clinic RBHA's downtown community medical service provider.

"We're an outpatient clinic, but we have a really interdisciplinary team," says Sara Hilleary, RICH Clinic's program manager. "We've got prescribers, of course ... but we [also] have care coordinators, therapists and peer support."

"Building that rapport and engagement first and then providing the education to prevent and focus on harm reduction is a big, big tool from an outpatient perspective," she says.

While the work continues, the downward trend in deaths encourages providers like Hilleary and Edwards to keep up the effort. "There is treatment, and people do recover," Edwards says. ■

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## DEVELOPMENT

# Coming Soon

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Freestanding emergency room in Chesterfield

HCA Virginia has finalized plans to build a freestanding emergency room in Chesterfield County. The facility at 9630 Iron Bridge Road will cover 13,000 square feet and feature 11 treatment rooms and imaging equipment.

The groundbreaking for the new building is planned for mid-2025, and HCA Virginia expects it to open by mid-2026. Once completed, it will expand their reach and care options in the central-southeastern corridor of Chesterfield County, a fast-growing part of the county where health care competitors like VCU Health are also planning new facilities.

"This new ER will allow us to deliver 24/7 emergency services closer to where our patients live and work and provide an additional HCA Virginia access point for the Chesterfield community," says Wes Hester, HCA Virginia's director of media relations.



## BON SECOURS

Eight-story tower addition to St. Mary's Hospital

In the West End, the future of Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital is looking up. The nearly 110-year-old hospital will undergo a \$370 million expansion project at its campus on Monument and Libbie avenues. Construction is expected to start this spring, with a completion goal of winter 2027. The project will add an eight-story tower—six active floors and two shelved for future growth—that will house an additional 391 hospital beds, new critical care units and more.

The tower will also include a range of specialized departments, from women's and children's services to cardiac and vascular care, that were previously not available on the campus.

"This new tower will ensure that our mission—the legacy of our sisters—continues for years to come," says Bryan Lee, president of St. Mary's Hospital.

—Nati Feliciano-Soto

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# A PRESCRIBED PROBLEM

AS PHARMACIES FACE CLOSURES,  
CARE PROVIDERS ARE FINDING NEW WAYS TO SURVIVE

By Kevin Johnson



**M**ore than 19,000 Richmond residents can go a mile in any direction — sometimes multiple miles — without coming to a pharmacy. Pharmacies are medical and retail oases in most neighborhoods, offering not only medication but also clinical offerings like vaccines and checkups, groceries, household goods, and more. Those 19,000 Richmonders without that community necessity within reach might not realize it, but their situation has become common enough to have a name: they're caught in a pharmacy desert.

Lack of retail pharmacy access is a growing problem throughout Virginia and the United States at large as chains such as CVS and Walgreens and small community providers alike shut down. Researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Pharmacy and the Virginia Board of Pharmacy recently identified 51 pharmacy deserts across the state; in Richmond, the Manchester, Highland Park, Fulton Hill and Dumbarton neighborhoods all lack pharmacies.

Meanwhile, employees of pharmacies are becoming more important to the overall well-being of the Richmonders they serve. Recent legislation in Virginia has expanded the services pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are able to provide to customers, making them a

more powerful tool for neighborhood-level care — in theory.

It's not only businesses that suffer as pharmacies close. A community without a pharmacy often has no health care facility accessible by foot, and studies show that residents not in close proximity to care centers struggle to manage chronic diseases, lose out on preventative care and generally have worse health outcomes than those with care nearby. In the face of these challenges, local researchers and health care providers are seeking new paths to bring services to these areas of isolation.

## DRYING UP

Dr. Teresa Salgado, a co-author of VCU's investigation into these deserts and associate professor at the School of Pharmacy, likes to think of pharmacies as the "front door to health care." The role pharmacists play in their communities has grown from filling prescriptions, she says, to include point-of-care services like preventative care and testing and prescribing medication for common illnesses — all available without having to visit a family doctor.

These options became available in 2020 because nationwide trends for primary care visits plummeted due to the pandemic, highlighting the need for more accessible care options. Shortly after, states including Virginia passed legislation that

allowed pharmacists to increase their care offerings, a major shift in the dynamic between pharmacist and patron.

While many pharmacies still need to staff up and train to reach the capacity needed for expansive test-to-treat programs, their vaccine programs have delivered more than 300 million COVID-19 vaccinations and provided 1 out of 3 adults' flu shots over the past five years. Both successes model a promising path for building test-to-treat services.

Despite pharmacies' growing ability to offer more services, researchers at the University of Southern California found that nearly 1 in 3 pharmacies across the U.S. have shuttered since 2010. While major chain stores have increasingly eliminated outposts, independent community pharmacies were more than twice as likely to close.

In a study published in February this year, researchers defined a pharmacy desert in Virginia as a census tract with low income (meaning more than 20% of residents in poverty or a median household income less than 80% of a relevant comparator) and low access to a pharmacy (meaning a distance of at least one mile from a retail or clinical location). Fulton, Manchester, Dumbarton and Highland Park met those criteria.

"We found that urban areas were most likely to be pharmacy deserts over rural >



or suburban areas, which stood out to us,” Salgado says. “It just goes to show that it’s those already vulnerable areas, with the already vulnerable populations, that’s where the pharmacies are closing.”

Although it depends on the region, pharmacy closures can be attributed to a variety of factors. Issues such as staffing shortages, chain store overexpansion, access to mail-order prescription services and rising drug costs can spell death for a drugstore.

“Any pharmacy trying to keep their doors open is on a roller coaster ride,” says Tana Kaefer, the director of clinical services and a pharmacist with Richmond’s Brema Pharmacy. Independently owned and operated, Brema has been open since 1976; Kaefer has been employed there for 21 years.

Located off Staples Mill Road, Brema is one of the few community pharmacies in the Richmond region. Brema has grown by offering sustainable, reliable service methods such as a synchronization model (which bundles multiple prescriptions for convenience) while also avoiding the retail-heavy model of most chain stores.

That approach, according to Kaefer, has allowed Brema to change with the times and adopt specialties, like long-term care for substance use recovery programs and training home care specialists in medication distribution, as they arise. “For us, it’s [about] finding those niches,” she says. “Then, even those are not forever; you have to be constantly evolving.”

While services like delivery, which Brema offers throughout Richmond, can aid those living in pharmacy deserts, neighborhoods without in-person pharmacies still miss out on potentially life-saving health care.

## REWRITING THE SCRIPT

Experts like Salgado and Kaefer both admit there isn’t one clear way to heal communities suffering from a lack of local pharmacies. Finding the right solution for each specific neighborhood involves more hyperlocal knowledge and research than one approach can offer — and even if a pharmacy can open in a desert, survival of the business is no easy feat.

In recent years, pharmacy-assisted

programs have brought together specialists from across the medical community to improve both patients’ and pharmacies’ well-being.

The Richmond and Henrico Health Districts, which are the local branches of the Virginia Department of Health, provide public health services to Richmond region residents. Made up of medical professionals and public health experts, they identify pressing health needs across the city and county and design programming to meet those needs — often partnering with accessible clinical facilities like pharmacies.

“Coming out of the pandemic, we had so many kids who didn’t have the vaccinations they needed to start school,” says Becca Bruhl, a children’s health advisor with Richmond and Henrico Health Districts. “So, we came together with some of our partners, specifically schools and area clinics, to figure out a better way to get the kids what they needed. ... We realized that it became more of a common thing for people to go to pharmacies to get vaccines over these last couple of years.”

Bruhl and others at the health districts were looking to leverage the federally funded Vaccines for Children program that provides free immunizations to health care providers, who in turn administer them to eligible children. Two pharmacies were chosen last year to pilot the free vaccines program in Richmond: HOPE Pharmacy in Church Hill and Brema Pharmacy.

For patients, the program helps connect families to a care center, introduce them to the services pharmacists can provide and keep children healthy and in school. In return, pharmacies can build a new potential client base and get paid for both their services and time.

“We’ve heard [from patients] that pharmacies have just been incredibly helpful, because they tend to have more accessible hours and are more approachable based on their locations and just generally being trusted; it’s been a nice thing that they can offer,” Bruhl says.

While the pilot programs take off, community drugstores and the broader Rich-



Dr. Teresa Salgado, co-author of the recent study on Virginia’s pharmacy deserts

mond medical community have ventured into other methods to curtail the problems facing pharmacies. Financial stability for pharmacies is one of the largest areas of focus to stop the stream of closures for researchers like Salgado.

“There are times where dispensing a medication is not profitable; it’s quite the opposite — you lose money,” she says. Pharmacy benefit managers, which control reimbursement rates and a pharmacy’s “in-network” status to patients, have provided low rates that threaten the financial stability of pharmacies, according to recent research from the American Economic Liberties Project.

In a move that could incentivize care for the state’s lowest income households and keep pharmacies in business, Virginia passed legislation in 2023 that mandated Medicaid payments for pharmacists’ clinical services. Once a pharmacist is credentialed, those services — including vaccines and test-to-treat procedures — can open a new revenue stream for a business.

While governments and community pharmacies play a role in building new, sustainable paths for viability, researchers like Salgado look to build a coalition of care in hopes of reversing the current deserts in Richmond and preventing new ones.

“I think the community plays a big role; and that can be clients, but also businesses, nonprofits and other organizations putting time and attention to these deserts,” Salgado says. “Certainly, there needs to be investment if you want things to work out.” ■



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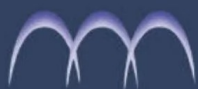
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# SMART SMILES

From digital impressions to AI-enhanced diagnostics, tech innovations transform dental care in Richmond

By Tharon Giddens

ASH DANIEL



**F**or many teens and pre-teens, braces are a rite of passage. Now, it's one that comes with some acceleration for patients of Richmond orthodontist Dr. Gustav Horsey.

As of June, patients ages 10 and up with braces and aligners from Horsey Orthodontics may be sent home with an OrthoPulse, a device designed to boost alignment speed and decrease treatment time.

"It's a little mouth guard that you put in your mouth for five minutes on the top and five minutes on the bottom, and the near-infrared light stimulates blood flow and stimulates cells in the tissues to turn over quicker," Horsey says.

Horsey says he learned about the treatment several months ago and studied the research on its efficacy. Its users report 75% less discomfort during orthodontic treatment and a reduction in treatment time by 50%, according to Horsey. The OrthoPulse has no medical contraindications and doesn't affect other dental treatments. "It's really cool technology," Horsey says. "It makes it more comfortable to get through braces and aligners."

Futuristic technical innovations like the OrthoPulse are reshaping dentistry across metro Richmond, from enhancing diagnostics to reducing the number of office visits needed for some treatments.

## A NEW DIMENSION

Dr. Karen S. McAndrew, a prosthodontist with practices in Mechanicsville and Williamsburg, recently compared the efficacy of two dental treatments, photogrammetry and smart conversion, on one restorative dentistry patient.

Photogrammetry is a technique that creates 3D models from photographs, according to McAndrew. Smart conversion entails converting an existing denture into implant-supported restorations. "I did it both ways on the same patient so I could test it out and compare them. They both came out great," she says.

Debuting in the dental world as of last year, photogrammetry takes the "glop" factor out of prosthodontistry. Instead of using mouthfuls of plaster to mold a model, photos are taken at different angles in the mouth and combined to make a 3D model that can be used to form and place custom prosthetics. "We're taking photographs and stitching them all together," McAndrew says.

Photogrammetry is faster and less messy than the traditional methods, with most of the work done on the computer, and the doctor is able to share results while the patient is still in the chair. The cost to the patient is "pretty much the same," McAndrew says, as is the outcome. "The prosthesis is the same whether you did it the old conventional way or the newer way."

Emerging technology to improve dental imaging isn't just limited to photogrammetry. The new tool of choice for Dr. Debra Haselton of the Richmond Center for Advanced Dentistry is intraoral scanning. The scanners are basically camera wands that are moved along the surface of the teeth to capture a 3D image of the mouth and dentition. The image, which you can see as it's being captured, is detailed and augmented and "gives you a view of the teeth that you can't [otherwise] see," she says.

For Haselton, the best use of intraoral scans is as a communication tool with her patients. "The patients can instantly see their teeth on a screen," she says. "We can communicate conditions, we can communicate the position of the teeth and what treatment is recommended and why. When they can see that outside of their mouth instead of in a little mirror, that's been a big benefit beyond the component where we use it for actual treatment."

Other dental practices that incorpo-



OrthoPulse, an infrared-assisted advancement for aligners and braces

rate intraoral scanning technology use the images in-house to mill crowns (dental restorations to cover a tooth), fillings and bridges, or restoration. The replacements can be crafted in-house with a 3D printer, often using alternative materials such as zirconia, which is tooth colored "and makes for a lovely restoration," says Dr. Lyndon F. Cooper, dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry and a professor of prosthodontics.

Cooper notes that the emerging uses for these tech advances are widespread. Fillings can be designed on a computer, printed and filled in within minutes. Metal braces are being replaced with 3D-printed aligners. Crowns typically require two or three office visits, but with 3D tech, a crown can be created and placed in one sitting. A more complicated treatment, such as dentures (a removable plate holding artificial teeth) used to involve three to five office visits, but that can be reduced to two visits with new tech, Cooper says.

For patients, fewer visits can mean less hassle in terms of missed work or arranging child care. It also saves time for the practitioner. "It can elevate both experiences," Cooper says. (An additional time-saver, Cooper adds, are AI-assisted programs that transcribe patient sessions in >





Dr. Gustav Horsey

real time, freeing dentists from typing in notes.)

McAndrew, who is also a member of the Bon Secours Cleft and Craniofacial Team at St. Mary's Hospital and teaches in the Pediatric Dental Residency Program with Bon Secours, says she's interested in expanding the use of scanning technology.

"Prosthodontist [visits are] more than conventional cleaning and fillings," she says. "That's where I'll use these newer skills, to advance those outcomes for new patients' cancer, cleft patients, patients that have had some type of accidents. ... There's not necessarily a cookbook that tells us how to do it; we just have to come up with it on our own."

### HIGH TECH, HIGH PRICE

One factor that isn't clear yet is the full impact of tech innovation in terms of reducing costs and increasing care, according to Cooper. He says the essential equipment needed for a practice includes 3D scanning technology and a mill, which creates tooth restorations from blocks of material. With only 3D imaging in house, a dentist can still save time and send the images instead of mouth molds

to a dental lab as a fulfillment center.

Dentistry has traditionally been a cottage industry, with many small or one-person practices, but that is changing. Cooper notes that about a quarter of new dentists now go to larger practices. Opening your own practice is expensive and capital-intensive, especially as the cost of more efficient technology increases. "A young dentist probably doesn't go out and start a practice," Cooper says.

Change comes quickly, and equipment can become outdated soon after purchase. New equipment also entails an investment in training and in securing records to comply with patient privacy rights. "There is a big cost. And if you buy technology and it just sits in your office and gathers dust, well, it's a bad investment," Haselton says.

### ON THE HORIZON

Haselton contends that artificial intelligence will have a major impact on everyday dental practice, helping to "confirm or deny what we are really seeing" and leading to better detection of oral cancers and decay in X-ray results. "It can make X-ray technology a little less subjective

and a little more objective," she says.

Radiographs and AI can evaluate patients and see areas of decay that were overlooked when viewed with the naked eye, but a clinician is still needed, McAndrew says.

"Sometimes AI is making mistakes, too," she says.

As with other fields, dentistry is also incorporating new tech in the front office. In some practices, you can make your own appointment and access your dental records online. "I truly believe that tech will make dentistry more available," Cooper says.

Teledentistry is another new addition to the field, but Cooper notes its impact may be limited. Dentistry is a hands-on, surgically or interventionally oriented field, he says. A teledentistry session may be good for a consultation, though. "You can't really do surgery on a computer," Cooper says. "You can speak to your patients, you can guide your patients, you can give them advice and help them, particularly where people live more than 15 or 20 miles from the nearest dentist."

Innovations have also led to some treatments that are less common, such as work with stem cells and bone regeneration. Cooper cites work in Japan where researchers are seeking to regrow teeth. He says such work is in its infancy, but researchers are beginning to understand the fundamentals of the process.

While tech advancements are changing treatments, it's the personal touch that matters in a practice. At VCU, the dental school seeks to impart a culture of care and excellence to its students. Technology is just a tool in that process. "A computer doesn't come with any values," Cooper says.

Haselton notes that new tools are only as good as the person wielding them. "It doesn't take the place of the thinking skills and the knowledge base of the dentist. It's really just a tool to augment the knowledge and communicate to the patient and help plan and, in a lot of cases, to manufacture," she says.

"At the end of the day, hopefully my patient has gotten better treatment [which allows] me to augment my treatment planning to another level." ■





# TOP DENTISTS 2025

Here are the 2025 Top Dentists winners, as selected by their peers in our annual survey, which was conducted online in March. Winners are listed in alphabetical order, with the top vote-getter's name in each category **highlighted**.

## COSMETIC DENTISTRY

### Jacob Fant

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### Graham Forbes

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### Marci Guthrie

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804-323-4200

### Robert LeNoir

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Snow, LeNoir  
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Dentistry  
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### Elizabeth Reynolds

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### Eugena Waggoner

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### TIE: David Voth

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### Tiffany Williams

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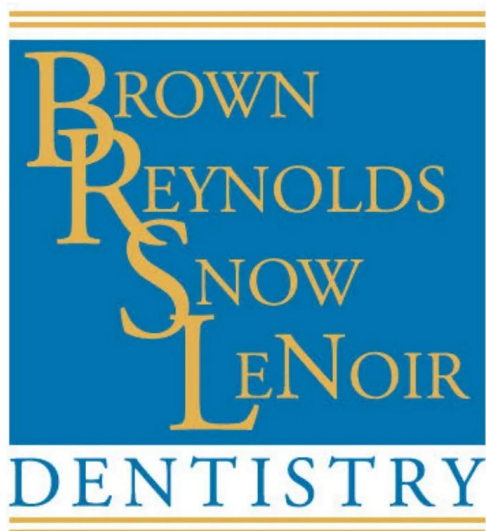
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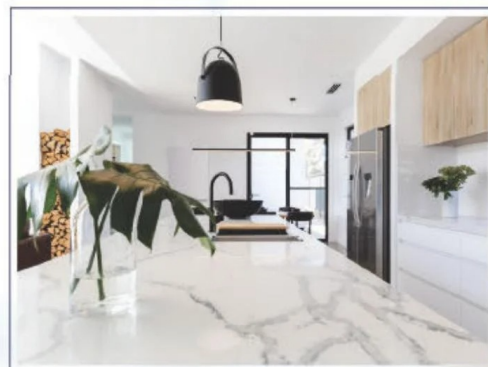




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## ACCESS FOR ALL: How Richmond-based Accessia Health is expanding equitable care - nationwide and at home.



For over 35 years, Accessia Health has helped individuals and families across the country access the care they need. As a nonprofit patient assistance organization, it provides comprehensive services that support individuals living with rare and chronic conditions. Though their reach is nationwide, the nonprofit's roots and headquarters remain in Richmond, the city where its mission began.

Accessia Health's financial assistance programs help cover the cost of insurance premiums, medication copays, travel for treatment, and other medically necessary expenses. Additional offerings include healthcare education, case management, and legal support for disability claims. These services reflect a commitment to treating the whole person, not just the condition.

President Tiara Green explains that the organization's flexible program model empowers patients to use their funding where it's needed most, something few others offer. "A diagnosis does not just affect your health," she says. "So, our programs are designed to treat the whole person."

Green emphasizes the importance of deepening local relationships and making sure that the community knows help is close to home. "We're focused on strengthening the impact in our home community and making sure our neighbors know that the same organization making an impact across the country is right down the road, working every day to support individuals and families here at home."

"Healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Our goal is to ensure that every person has access to the care they need."

— Tiara Green, President, Accessia Health

Anyone who thinks they, or someone they care for, may qualify for assistance is encouraged to visit [accessiahealth.org](https://accessiahealth.org) and walk through our prescreen tool. If you're unsure whether you qualify, reach out anyway. Sometimes the biggest hurdle is just taking that first step, especially when you're overwhelmed by a new diagnosis or mounting bills. Accessia Health is here to help lighten the burden where they can.



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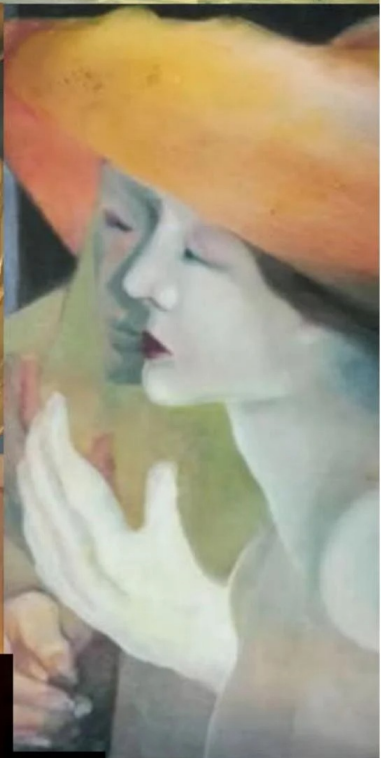
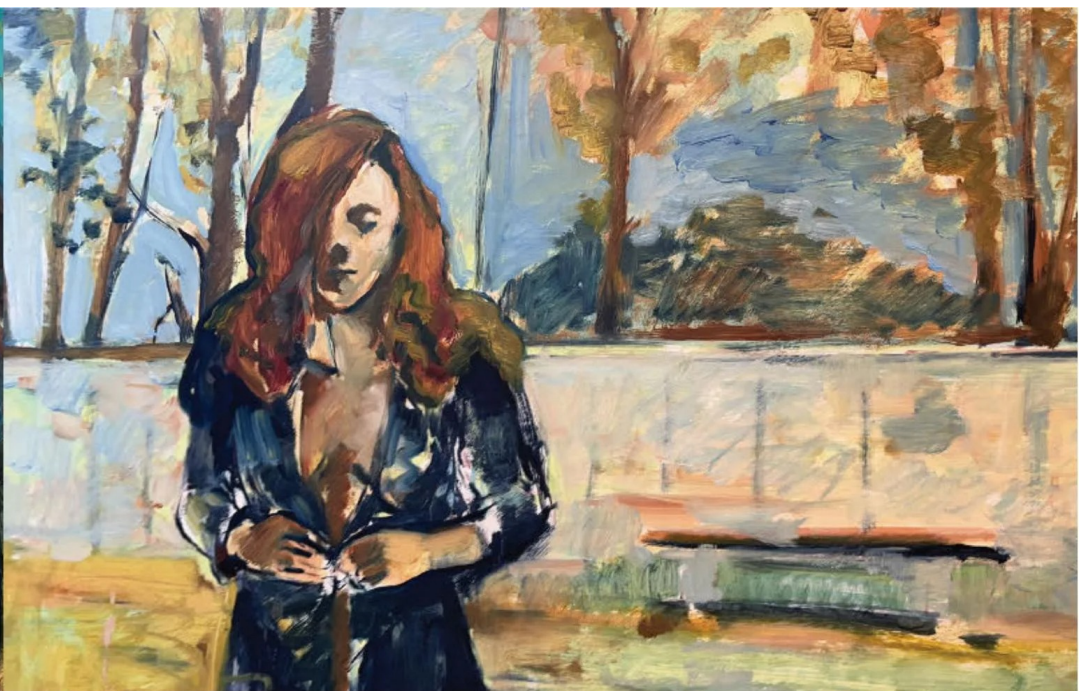
|                                                                                                                      | Birthing Center | Cardiac Catheterization | Organ Transplants | Research/Teaching Hospital | Specialty ICUs                                                       | Palliative Care | Rooms/Beds                                                                     | Obstetrics/<br>Gynecology Ward<br>Center | Oncology (Cancer)                      | Burn/Wound Unit                                                  | Rehab Services | Trauma<br>Designation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center</b><br>8260 Atlee Road, 804-764-6000<br>or bonsecours.com            | ✓               | ✓                       | ✗                 | ✓                          | CCU, CVICU,<br>NICU, IVCU,<br>PCU                                    | ✓               | 269 beds                                                                       | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✓<br>outpatient<br>wound unit                                    | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Bon Secours Richmond Community Hospital</b><br>1500 N. 28th St., 804-225-1700<br>or bonsecours.com                | ✗               | ✗                       | ✗                 | ✗                          | PCU                                                                  | ✓               | 104 beds, 40<br>behavioral<br>health unit<br>beds                              | ✗                                        | ✓                                      | ✓<br>inpatient<br>wound care                                     | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center</b><br>13710 St. Francis Blvd., 804-594-7300<br>or bonsecours.com          | ✓               | ✓                       | ✗                 | ✓                          | ICU, NICU                                                            | ✓               | 185 beds                                                                       | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✓<br>outpatient<br>wound unit and<br>inpatient wound<br>care     | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital</b><br>5801 Brema Road, 804-285-2011<br>or bonsecours.com                         | ✓               | ✓                       | ✗                 | ✓                          | CCU, CVICU,<br>PICU, ICU,<br>NICU, IMCU,<br>CVSU, NSTU               | ✓               | 391 beds, 32<br>behavioral<br>health unit<br>beds                              | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✓<br>outpatient<br>wound unit and<br>inpatient wound<br>services | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Bon Secours Southside Medical Center</b><br>200 Medical Park Blvd., Petersburg,<br>804-765-5000 or bonsecours.com | ✓               | ✓                       | ✗                 | ✗                          | CVICU, NICU,<br>ICU, PCU                                             | ✓               | 300 beds, 31<br>behavioral<br>health unit<br>beds                              | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✓<br>outpatient<br>wound unit and<br>inpatient wound<br>care     | ✓              | III                   |
| <b>Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU</b><br>1000 E. Broad St., 804-828-CHOR<br>or chrichmond.org                | ✗               | ✓                       | ✓                 | ✓                          | NICU, PICU                                                           | ✓               | included in<br>VCU Medical<br>Center count                                     | ✗                                        | ✓                                      | ✓                                                                | ✓              | pediatric<br>I        |
| <b>Chippenham Hospital</b><br>7101 Jahnke Road, 804-483-0000 or<br>chippenhammed.com                                 | ✓               | ✓                       | ✗                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | BICU, PICU,<br>PCU, CVICU,<br>CCU, MSTICU                            | ✓               | 466 rooms,<br>137 inpatient<br>behavioral<br>health beds                       | ✓                                        | ✗<br>oncology<br>services<br>available | ✓                                                                | ✓              | I                     |
| <b>Henrico Doctors' Hospital</b><br>1602 Skipwith Road, 804-289-4500<br>or henricodoctors.com                        | ✓               | ✓                       | ✓                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | CICU, SICU,<br>NICU                                                  | ✓               | 340 beds, 298<br>private rooms                                                 | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✗                                                                | ✓              | II                    |
| <b>Johnston-Willis Hospital</b><br>1401 Johnston Willis Drive,<br>804-483-5000 or johnstonwillismed.com              | ✓               | ✗                       | ✗                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | NICU, NSICU,<br>MSICU                                                | ✓               | 292 private<br>rooms                                                           | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✗                                                                | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Parham Doctors' Hospital</b><br>7700 E. Parham Road, 804-747-5600<br>or parhamdoctors.com                         | ✗               | ✗                       | ✗                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | CCU                                                                  | ✓               | 200 private<br>rooms, 24 be-<br>havioral health<br>unit beds, 36<br>rehab beds | ✗                                        | ✗                                      | ✗                                                                | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Retreat Doctors' Hospital</b><br>2621 Grove Ave., 804-254-5100<br>or retreatdoctors.com                           | ✗               | ✗                       | ✗                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | CCU, ICU                                                             | ✓               | 226 private<br>rooms, 20<br>inpatient be-<br>havioral health<br>unit beds      | ✗                                        | ✗                                      | ✓<br>wound<br>unit                                               | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>Richmond Veterans Affairs Medical Center</b><br>1201 Broad Rock Blvd.,<br>804-675-5000 or richmond.va.gov         | ✗               | ✓                       | ✓                 | ✓                          | MICU, SICU,<br>CCU                                                   | ✓               | 382 beds                                                                       | ✗                                        | ✓                                      | ✗                                                                | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>TriCities Hospital</b><br>411 W. Randolph Road,<br>Hopewell, 804-541-1600 or<br>triditieshospital.com             | ✗               | ✗                       | ✗                 | ✗ <sup>†</sup>             | ICU                                                                  | ✓               | 147 beds, 40<br>behavioral<br>health beds                                      | ✗                                        | ✗                                      | ✗                                                                | ✓              | ✗                     |
| <b>VCU Health/VCU Medical Center</b><br>1250 E. Marshall St., 804-828-9000<br>or vcuhealth.org                       | ✓               | ✓                       | ✓                 | ✓                          | CICU, CSICU,<br>ICU, MIICU,<br>MRICU, NICU,<br>NSICU, PICU,<br>STICU | ✓               | 837 beds                                                                       | ✓                                        | ✓                                      | ✓                                                                | ✓              | I                     |

\* Has family-practice pharmacy, nursing and radiology residence programs † Provides research via clinical trials

**ICU ABBREVIATIONS:** BICU: Behavioral; CCU/CSICU: Coronary/Cardiac Surgery; CICU: Cardiac; CVICU: Cardiovascular; CVSU: Cardiovascular Services Unit; ICU: Intensive Care Unit; IMCU: Intermediate Care Unit; IVCU: Interventional Cardiac Unit; MIICU: Medical Intermediate; MICU: Medical; MRICU: Medical Respiratory; MSICU: Medical Surgical; MSTICU: Medical Surgical Trauma; NICU: Neonatal; NSICU: Neuroscience; NSTU: Neuroscience Telemetry Unit; PCU: Progressive Care; PICU: Pediatric; RCU: Renal; SICU: Surgical; STICU: Surgical Trauma

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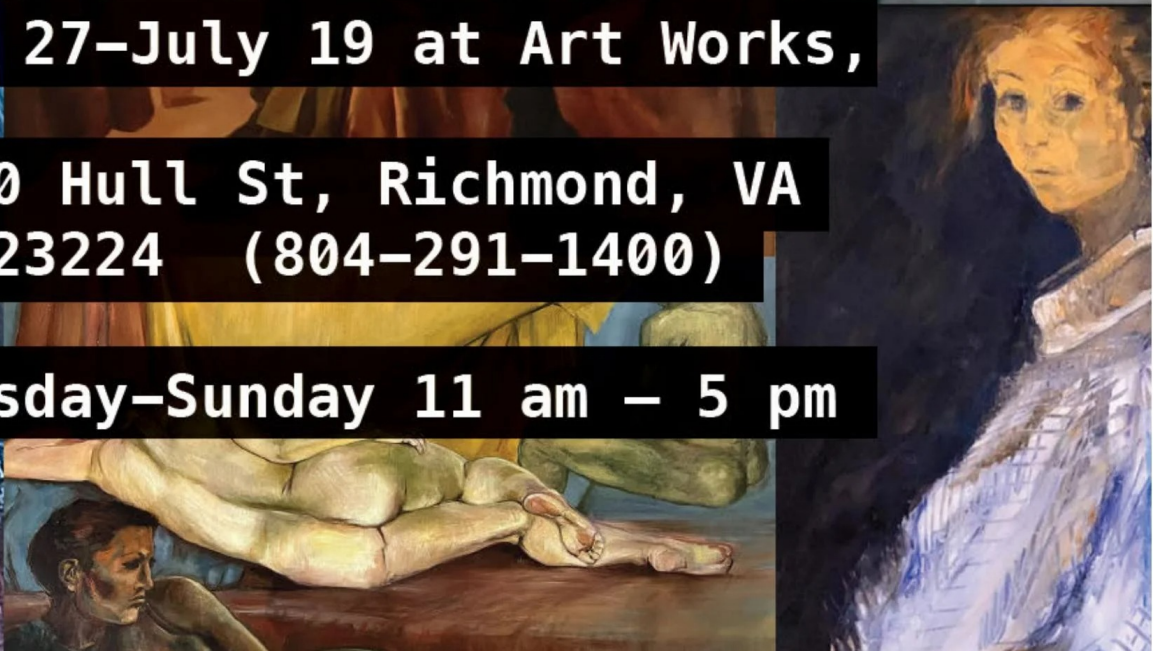


# Chala Exhibit

June 27-July 19 at Art Works,

320 Hull St, Richmond, VA  
23224 (804-291-1400)

Tuesday-Sunday 11 am - 5 pm





# WELL-BEING

## Medical

### **RICHMOND ENT**

Discover exceptional ear, nose and throat care at Richmond ENT. Our team of board-certified specialists and skilled nurse practitioners provide comprehensive treatment for adults and children, ensuring personalized care with 30-minute appointments for new patients. We excel in minimally invasive sinus treatments, including balloon sinuplasty, and offer on-site low radiation CT scans. With a reputation for compassionate care and innovative procedures, Richmond ENT is your trusted partner for all ENT needs. Visit us at **richmondent.com** to learn more, and call **804-330-5501** to schedule your appointment today.

### **U.S. DERMATOLOGY PARTNERS**

Our Midlothian, Virginia, office is led by board-certified dermatologist Dr. J. Scott Kennedy. Dr. Kennedy was chief dermatologist at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and staff dermatologist at the Pentagon Flight Medicine Clinic. After 10 years in the Air Force, Dr.

Kennedy practiced with U.S. Dermatology Partners in Arizona for 13 years. He has held a fondness for Virginia since his time in the Air Force, and he is thrilled to return to the area to provide dermatologic care. **804-464-8644** or **usdermatologypartners.com**

### **VIRGINIA UROLOGY UROGYNECOLOGY, UROLOGY AND UROLOGICAL SURGERY**

Virginia Urology has more than 65 board-certified providers and is one of the largest urology practices in the United States. Their physicians specialize in urology, urogynecology, urologic pathology, urologic radiology and radiation oncology. Many providers sub-specialize even further in areas such as oncology, incontinence, minimally invasive techniques, erectile dysfunction, kidney stones and women's urology. Virginia Urology patients are assured that their physician is knowledgeable and highly experienced. Since treatments are not one size fits all, Virginia Urology provides the area's

most comprehensive range of services in urologic care. Visit us at **804-330-9105** or **uro.com**.

## Dental

### **BEST SMILES DENTIST**

Dr. Naveen Chennupati is a highly respected dentist in the Richmond and Henrico, Virginia, area known for his expertise in root canals, dental implants and gentle, compassionate care. With over 14 years of experience and more than 5,000 root canals performed, he is trusted by both patients and fellow dental professionals for his precision and calming chairside manner. A graduate of the prestigious Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, Dr. Chennupati delivers advanced clinical care with a personal touch. He is also dedicated to community service, volunteering through the Sharing Smiles program to treat uninsured children and promoting wellness with his free fitness bootcamp, HITT2FIT. Whether restoring a smile with implants or preserving natural teeth through endodontic therapy, Dr.





Chennupati blends clinical excellence, mentorship and a deep commitment to improving lives through better oral health. **BestSmilesDentist.com**

## COMMONWEALTH DENTISTRY

Commonwealth Dentistry has proudly served Virginia for 25 years, providing trusted dental care across the Central, Eastern and Western regions. Our experienced team offers a full range of services — including general, cosmetic, pediatric, orthodontic, periodontal and endodontic care — all under one roof. This means convenience, continuity and high-quality treatment for every member of the family. We believe in building lasting relationships with our patients and delivering care that truly makes a difference. At Commonwealth Dentistry, we're committed to

Changing Lives One Smile at a Time! Learn more or schedule an appointment at **commonwealth-dentistry.com**.

## COMMONWEALTH PROSTHODONTICS

Why choose a prosthodontist for a tooth extraction? A healthy, beautiful smile does wonders for our self-confidence. But what happens when our teeth are damaged or decayed? Dental issues like over-crowding, disease and decay can often be solved by extracting the affected tooth, which is a procedure offered by most dentists. But this extraction leaves visible holes in your smile and, by extension, your self-confidence. At Commonwealth Prosthodontics, we are specialists who are not only able to treat your problem by extracting the tooth, but we can then

replace that tooth with a permanent dental implant to restore your smile to its natural beauty! **dentalimplantsrva.com**

## DRS. BROWN, REYNOLDS, SNOW AND LENOIR DENTISTRY

At Drs. Brown, Reynolds, Snow and LeNoir Dentistry, we are passionate about your dental health. We have worked hard to establish a general dental practice that has a reputation for providing excellent services in all aspects of dentistry. From cosmetics to implants to general family dentistry, our goal is to ensure that our patients receive state-of-the-art dentistry in a warm, comfortable, welcoming environment. We are proud and honored to have been consistently recognized by our patients and peers as one of the best dental practices in Richmond. To find out more or to schedule an appointment, please visit us at **brsdentistry.com**.

## DR. GLORIA WARD

Dr. Gloria Ward earned her first D.D.S. and Master of Science Degree in Periodontal Prosthesis from CES University in Colombia, South America. She moved to Virginia in 1999 and obtained a Master of Science in Dental Materials and later earned her second D.D.S. degree from VCU in 2003. Her main focus of practice is dentures, implant restorations and cosmetics. Dr.





Ward is certified in oral conscious sedation and speaks Spanish fluently. She also has a special interest in sleep apnea. Visit **advanceddentistryva.com** or call **804-270-7940** to learn more.

### DR. KANYON KEENEY

A board-certified oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Dr. Keeney concentrates on dental implant and bone grafting surgery. He is a diplomate in the International Congress of Oral Implantology and is involved extensively in testing new grafting and implant products. A spokesman for several leading dental implant companies, Dr. Keeney is sought after for his dynamic presentations and has spoken at local, national and international events. His extensive experience allows him to treat patients of

all levels of difficulty, as well as those with compromised medical histories. His state-of-the-art office is conveniently located in Short Pump; visit **vadentalimplants.com** to learn more.

### DRS. MILLER AND BEITZ

Dr. Benita Miller and Dr. Jill Beitz are proud to serve the greater Richmond area with exceptional care in periodontal and dental implant surgery. Our practice is dedicated to enhancing your smile while managing periodontal disease, which plays a critical role in your overall health. In addition to our surgical services, we are pleased to offer Botox® treatment to help relieve jaw tension and TMJ-related pain, providing a non-invasive solution for improved comfort. Whether

you're seeking to improve your oral health, restore your smile or address chronic jaw discomfort, we're here to help. Visit **richmondperio.net** or call **804-285-4867** to learn more.

### DRS. BEN OVERSTREET, JOHN WHITE, KARA DUNEGAN AND DENVER LYONS

Specializing in periodontal dental care, their services include treatment of bone loss around teeth and implants due to disease; repair of soft tissue recession; regeneration of lost bone; replacement of teeth with dental implants; and enhancement restorative care by creating a healthy foundation. They also commonly perform cosmetic procedures, including enhancing short teeth and correcting long teeth with soft tissue grafting. The doctors are active in local, regional, national and international organizations and serve on governing boards and executive councils within these groups. They are tremendously honored to partner with more than 300 general dentists in the area, and it's this approach to your care via collaborative teamwork that creates predictable and successful results. Their goal is excellence in periodontics, and they look forward to having the opportunity to provide your care. They welcome new patients to their practice. For more information, call **804-355-6593** or visit





**richmondperioonline.com.**

## JAMES RIVER ORTHODONTICS

Ranked in the top 1% in the nation and voted Top Orthodontist by the dental community for 13 consecutive years, JRO provides the ultimate patient experience by putting their people and community first. With the latest technology, spacious office accommodations and excellent service, Dr. Scarborough, Dr. Loflin and their team are going above and beyond to ensure patient comfort and peace of mind. JRO has added a second location in Mechanicsville to better serve their patients. With over 1,250 five-star reviews, JRO seeks to deliver the highest quality treatment and care for Richmond and the surrounding communities. We look forward to seeing your smiles soon! Visit our website at **jamesriverorthodontics.com** to schedule your complimentary consultation today.

## JNT DENTAL

We at JNT Dental extend our sincere appreciation to all the practitioners, patients and individuals who have supported us so steadfastly for many years. Our goal has always been to provide high-quality, caring service to our patients using constant continuing education and the latest technology. We are pleased to announce Dr.

Francisco Mesa is now part of our practice. Dr. Mesa has extensive postgraduate dental experience and shares Dr. Tregaskes' passion for helping craniofacial pain and sleep patients. Call **804-395-6808** or visit **jntdental.com**.

## SPARKLE PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Dr. Holly Lewis is a board-certified pediatric dentist specializing in dental care for children of all ages. She is the founder and owner of Sparkle Pediatric Dentistry, with offices in Short Pump and Hanover. Dr. Lewis has served as the president of the Virginia Society of Pediatric Dentistry and has been recognized with numerous awards for her clinical excellence. She and the other providers at Sparkle are committed to improving patients' lives and continuing to gain the latest skills in dentistry, including cosmetic treatment, frenectomies and myofunctional therapy. Learn more at **pediatricdentistryrichmond.com**.

## VIRGINIA FAMILY DENTISTRY

Celebrating over 50 years in business, Virginia Family Dentistry has served the Richmond area since 1974. Our doctor-owned practice consists of 17 locations and over 70 general dentists and specialists, including orthodontists,



periodontists, prosthodontists, endodontists and pediatric dentists. We provide comprehensive care for lifelong patients, and with a dedicated team of over 400 dental professionals and staff, we proudly support generations of families across Central Virginia. Our commitment to excellence and personalized care remains as strong as ever. Discover the difference 50 years of trusted service makes by visiting **vadentist.com**.

## VIRGINIA ORAL & FACIAL SURGERY

For over 40 years, the goal at VOFS has always been simple: to bring excellence in oral and maxillofacial surgery to the greater Richmond community. Drs. Keeney, Harris, Dymon, Wlodawsky, Watson, Agnihotri, Wheeler, Phelps, Herrera and Gardner are dedicated to patient safety, predictable outcomes and great communication. We are specialists of the face and focus on procedures like dental implants, wisdom teeth, bone grafts, facial reconstruction, sedation and much more! We are now excited to offer a same-day surgery consultation for your convenience. Visit **oralfacialsurgery.com**. ■



## BEAUTY

# Pulled Together

Melt Wax Parlor brings beauty pros under one roof

By Kevin Johnson

**I**n the retail world, opportunities can come when they're least expected. That was Ashley Lewis' experience in late 2024. In between appointments at Bombshell Salon, she learned that the longstanding beauty shop was closing unexpectedly. That's when a former employee, Alex Atkins, reached out to gauge her interest in launching a new beauty parlor.

"It wasn't something I was really looking to get into at first," Lewis says. "[But] there were a bunch of clients that now had no home for service."

After Atkins' inquiry, Lewis — the founder of multi-location juice bar The Beet Box — didn't shy away from the challenge. In a matter of weeks, she went from client to owner after debuting Melt Wax Parlor at 2513 W. Cary St. in October

last year. The studio's team provides body and face waxes, spray tan services, procedures like sugaring (a gentler form of waxing), and cosmetic services including permanent makeup and lash lifts.

Lewis and the Melt Wax Parlor crew sought to emphasize inclusivity in their practice, focusing on services for a diverse clientele. "I think salons [can be] pretentious or stuffy environments, so making this somewhere that is friendly for everyone, all genders and sexualities, was important," Lewis says.

The parlor's wax offerings have become popular among men, which is a demographic not often catered to by wax salons, according to Lewis. "That was something that Bombshell was popular for, so we do offer that here and it's

a huge part of our clientele," she adds.

Bombshell Salon, first opened in 2009, formerly had locations in Carytown, Short Pump and Midlothian, in addition to an outpost in Las Vegas, Nevada. The business shuttered all shops abruptly in August 2024, which left many employees confused and without an established brand to practice under. Bombshell co-founder Melissa Black, in a statement shared on Instagram in September 2024, cited poor finances as the cause of the closure.

Atkins left Bombshell before the closure. After time spent as an independent practitioner, she sought to re-form the community of talented beauticians who worked at Bombshell.

"I missed the camaraderie, having friends to work with and bounce ideas off of," she says. "I feel like each of us here [has] a strong suit, and we make a really, really good team."

Lewis runs the business in tandem with the tenured staff, relying on their experience in the field to offer the intimate, comfortable salon setting that many clients had lost.

"With a business like the one that closed, I think it left a lot of people without a wax home," Lewis says. "Being able to provide a good, consistent service for people with knowledgeable technicians is us trying to be that home." ■



Ashley Lewis, founder of Melt Wax Parlor

FROM TOP: COURTESY MELT WAX PARLOR; JAY PAUL





# Set Sail

aboard the Yorktown  
Schooner ...



# ALLIANCE II

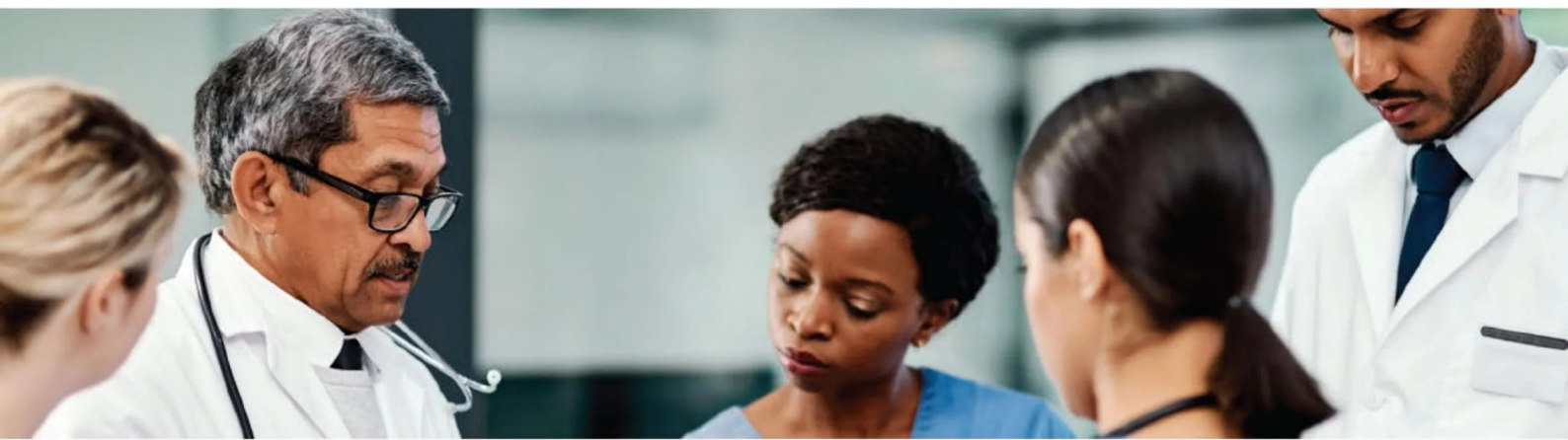
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AND EAGLES AS YOU SAIL  
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# MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

Fulton Mortgage Company has designed a mortgage program dedicated to making homeownership easy and affordable for medical professionals<sup>1</sup> including Physicians, Pharmacists, Dentists and Veterinarians. If you have a medical doctorate degree, this program may work for you.

- 100% financing<sup>2</sup> available for loan amounts up to \$1.5 Million
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- 90% financing<sup>2</sup> available for loan amounts up to \$3 Million
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Fulton Bank, N.A. Member FDIC. Subject to credit approval. <sup>1</sup>Medical Doctorate degree required. Restrictions apply. <sup>2</sup>Financing is based on the lower of either the appraised value (fair market value) or contract sales price. <sup>3</sup>Monthly payment for a \$250,000 15-year term mortgage at 3.582% Annual Percentage Rate (APR) would be \$1,774.71. Monthly payment for a \$250,000 30-year term mortgage at 3.582% Annual Percentage Rate (APR) would be \$1,108.43. Payment does not include amounts for taxes and insurance and the actual payment will be greater.

<sup>4</sup>Adjustable rates are subject to increase after the initial fixed-rate period. Interest on the portion of the loan that exceeds the value of the dwelling is not tax deductible. Please consult your tax advisor.





# A&E



BRITTANY DILIBERTO

Art, theater, music  
and more in RVA  
**P. 74**

Carbon Leaf  
plays Maymont  
**P. 78**

Creative Minds Publications  
celebrates 20 years  
**P. 80**

The Head and the Heart's new  
album and local return  
**P. 82**

Edited by NICOLE COHEN



# Datebook



## THEATER

### AFTER LIFE

Firehouse Theatre's producing artistic director Nathaniel Shaw says an essential component of the theater "is to amplify local talent." "Burial Tax," written by Andrew Gall and directed by Paul Takács (pictured left), will have its world premiere at Firehouse, July 11-27. After two years in development under the working title "Lake Effect," the work promises to be a hauntingly dark comedy about the reunion of two estranged siblings who gather with their spouses at their family's lake house to spread the ashes of their recently deceased father. It's a release of beauty and pain, a comedic experience of family dynamics, and a unique take on the pressures of adulthood. Gall says, "It makes us think about a shared experience in a new way." Tickets are \$5 to \$35. [firehousetheatre.org](http://firehousetheatre.org) —**Julinda D. Lewis**

## ART

### BEYOND PERSPECTIVE

"UnBound!" is the 14th annual exhibition by Candela Books + Gallery of compelling endeavors in contemporary photography running through Aug. 9 — and on Aug. 2, it's a big crazy party, too. Gallery founder Gordon Stettinius launched "UnBound!" as an invitational, entrance fee-free presentation of today's art photographers and to create a collection that will ultimately be picked up by an institution. The exhibition presents more than 50 works encompassing a wide range of concepts and interpretations of the photographic medium. Many of the pieces are for sale. This year, the gala, a cross between a prom and a happening is Shakespearean-themed as "A Midsummer Night's Fever Dream," which the gallery describes as "groovy medieval whimsy." Gala tickets are \$75 each or \$125 for a pair. [candelagallery.com](http://candelagallery.com) —**Harry Kollatz Jr.**



FROM TOP: COURTESY FIREHOUSE THEATRE; RACHEL JUMP; COURTESY VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE







#### MUSIC

## DIVING IN

From covering Michael Jackson on YouTube to signing with Warner Records to crooning on network TV, Teddy Swims' popularity rose meteorically during the first half of the 2020s. In 2023, he released his debut album, "I've Tried Everything but Therapy (Part 1)," a collection delving into the Georgia-born singer's history of hurt and healing. It yielded Swims' breakout single, "Lose Control," which recently broke the Billboard Hot 100's record for longest run. He shared the second installment in January. "On the last album, I felt as if it just left you with so much heartbreak and no resolve," Swims said in a press release. "Of course, there is still heartbreak on Part 2, but I believe we've given just a little more closure this time around!" He'll perform at Virginia Credit Union Live at Richmond Raceway on July 14 at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$86. [vaculive.com](http://vaculive.com)

—Davy Jones



#### EVENT

## RIVER RACE

An ancient Chinese celebration is coming to Richmond on Aug. 2 in the form of the Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival at Robious Landing in Chesterfield. Legend has it that the traditional event commemorates the sacrifice of a Chinese poet, but for this August's race, hundreds of Richmonders from local businesses and communities are coming together for a friendly competition on the James River. Teams will compete in 500-meter races in 40-foot canoes decorated with dragons and vibrant colors. Registration fees start at \$995 per team. For those not looking to row, there will be plenty of vantage points for spectating and a free festival featuring cultural performances. The first race starts at 8:10 a.m., and the accompanying celebration kicks off at 10 a.m. [sportsbackers.org](http://sportsbackers.org) —Melody Yuan

#### EXHIBITION

## BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

Within the complicated history of slavery in this country are individual stories of those few who freed themselves by outright purchase and then, in some cases, emancipating family members. Several of these individuals are highlighted in "Un/Bound: Free Black Virginians, 1619-1865," an exhibition on view through July 4, 2027, at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Elizabeth Klaczynski, the VMHC's associate curator of exhibitions and the curator of "Un/Bound," observes, "Un/Bound offers a comprehensive treatment of the rich, complicated history of a group of people we don't collectively know much about." The multi-institutional collaboration uses photographs, artifacts and objects to present 200 years' worth of struggles to obtain and maintain personal liberty. Here, too, it is shown how the descendants of those who freed themselves continue that legacy. The exhibition is included with museum admission (\$8 to \$12). [virginiahistory.org](http://virginiahistory.org) —HK

FROM LEFT: COURTESY WARNER BROS.; GETTY IMAGES





## SPECIAL EVENTS

## ROCK OUT



The National Day of Rock 'n' Roll is celebrated on July 7, but there are plenty of rockin' shows in RVA to experience this month, including the long-awaited return of a Virginia favorite, a student exhibition, a performance by Rock & Roll Hall of Famers and the triumphant comeback of a Richmond artist.

## JULY 15-16

For the first time in 30 years, the Dave Matthews Band will perform in Richmond. The "Crash into Me" and "Satellite" singer from Charlottesville will take the stage of the Allianz Amphitheater at Riverfront for two shows, both beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are going fast, but as of press time options are available starting at \$409.50. [allianzamphitheater.com](http://allianzamphitheater.com)

## JULY 19

A Richmond favorite, Rosie Soul went on a hiatus from performing in 2015 due to a breast cancer diagnosis. Focusing on their health, they beat the disease and are returning to the stage in support of not only their rock, but also breast cancer awareness. They're bringing their "Stand Up & Shout!" show to The Beacon Theatre in Hopewell, which they bill as "a tribute to the greatest hard rock songs in history." The show starts at 7:45 p.m. and tickets are \$33 to \$48. [beacontheatreva.com](http://beacontheatreva.com)

## JULY 22

The "School of Rock AllStars Tour" brings the top students in the genre from around the globe to the Richmond Music Hall. Expect to hear some classic and modern rock 'n' roll tunes performed by accomplished budding artists. Less than 1% of students from the more than 400 School of Rock franchise locations are selected to join the AllStars Tour annually. The show begins at 6:30 p.m. and tickets start at \$21. [thebroadberry.com](http://thebroadberry.com)

## JULY 30

In 2024, Foreigner was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and they'll play their multi-platinum hits when they stop in Richmond for the Atlantic Union Bank After Hours concert series in Doswell. The group is recognized for their classic bangers, including "Juke Box Hero," "Urgent," "Hot Blooded" and many more. They take the stage at 7 p.m. and tickets start at \$41. [afterhoursconcertseries.com](http://afterhoursconcertseries.com)



—Compiled by  
Nicole Cohen



## THEATER

## HEARD HERE FIRST

They are young, their work is original and you may see the first staged performances of some promising careers. The 35th New Voices for the Theater program hosted by the School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond Community is presented July 26 at SPARC, 2106 N. Hamilton St. Performed in two sets of three one-act plays (2:30 to 5 p.m. and 6:30 to 9 p.m.) under the name "Festival of New Works," these shows are the result of a statewide playwriting competition and a two-week workshop for the finalists. A 2024 participant, Molly, enthused about her experience, "This program is like cutting up watermelon. It might be slightly tough to complete, but it is amazing when you get the result!" To attend, there's a \$5 suggested donation. [sparcrichmond.org](http://sparcrichmond.org) —HK



## MUSIC

## RVA'S DAY

Back for its third year, 804 Day will celebrate the creativity and cohesion of Richmond's music scene on Aug. 2. The 17th Street Market will play host to 10 bands curated by local label Shockoe Records. Acts include rock group Bucko, making its 804 Day debut, and rapper Nickelus E, returning a year after inclement weather scuttled his set. The lineup also lists three Shockoe-signed acts — Høly River, Rein and Vexine — all with albums scheduled for 2025 releases. This year's fest moves to a Saturday to accommodate more schedules. "We're really excited to give people a lot more opportunity to come and hang out," says Reese Williams, Shockoe Records' chief communications officer and production coordinator. The music runs 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. and admission is free. [shockoerecords.com/804day](http://shockoerecords.com/804day) —DJ



# Happenings



## MUSIC

**7/10**

The Westchester Concert Series presents soul and rock band Mystic Soul Bubbas and singer-songwriter Steve Bassett from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Westchester Commons' Main Street. Free. [shopwestchestercommons.com](http://shopwestchestercommons.com)

**7/11**

With hit country songs "Wagon Wheel," "Don't Think I Don't Think About It" and "It Won't Be Like This For Long," Darius Rucker plays the Atlantic Union Bank After Hours concert series in Doswell at 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$46. [afterhoursconcertseries.com](http://afterhoursconcertseries.com)

**7/12**

The Altria Theater hosts the fifth annual All White Southern Soul Music Festival, with performances from King George, 803 Fresh and others. 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$104. [altriatheater.com](http://altriatheater.com)

**7/13**

Forest Hill Park's Music in the Park series continues with soul, funk and R&B artist DJ Harrison from 6 to 8 p.m. Free. [rva.gov](http://rva.gov)

**7/17**

Brad Paisley performs at the Allianz Amphitheater at Riverfront during his "Truck Still Works World Tour." 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$41. [allianzamphitheater.com](http://allianzamphitheater.com)

**7/19**

English new wave band A Flock of Seagulls performs as part of the "I Love the 80's" tour beginning at 8 p.m. at The National. Tickets start at \$45. [thenationalva.com](http://thenationalva.com)

**7/19**

Dogwood Dell's 68th annual Festival of Arts continues with Plunky Day in RVA featuring funk, jazz and Afro-fusion group Plunky & Oneness performing at 8 p.m. Free. [rva.gov](http://rva.gov)

**8/3**

Indie rock artists The Flaming Lips and Modest Mouse play Brown's Island during the LiVE Loud concert series. Music starts at 6 p.m. \$77. [thebroadberry.com](http://thebroadberry.com)



## STAGE

**7/11-12**

Michael Blackson, "The African King of Comedy," performs four shows at Richmond's Funny Bone Comedy Club. Tickets are \$42 to \$80. [richmond.funnybone.com](http://richmond.funnybone.com)

**7/17**

Mortal Fools Collective performs William Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" at 7 p.m. at The Basement. Tickets are \$20 (\$25 at the door). [thebasementrva.org](http://thebasementrva.org)

**7/18-8/3**

The Henrico Theatre Company performs the musical "8 Track: The Sounds of the '70s," at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. \$10 to \$12. [artsglenallen.com](http://artsglenallen.com)

## GALLERIES

**7/25-9/20**

An exploration in human connection, "Bradley + Bradley: The Weight of Vanishing Shadows" is exhibited at Art Works. [artworksrva.com](http://artworksrva.com)

**THROUGH 8/14**

The multimedia group exhibition "[Work] 2025" at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond features pieces from VisArts' instructors, staff and board of directors. [visarts.org](http://visarts.org)

**THROUGH 8/16**

Artspace's satellite exhibition at Natalie's Taste of Lebanon features Alice Anne Ellis' "Tea in the Garden" collection. [artspacegallery.org](http://artspacegallery.org)

## EXHIBITIONS

**THROUGH 7/12**

The Branch Museum of Design displays "Echos of Us," a group exhibition of 16 Black Virginia-based artists creating in a vast array of mediums. Included with museum admission (\$10). [branchmuseum.org](http://branchmuseum.org)

**THROUGH 8/16**

The Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia presents the art exhibition "Bodies of Labor: Hands that Built a Nation." Included with museum admission (\$6 to \$10). [blackhistorymuseum.org](http://blackhistorymuseum.org)

**THROUGH 8/24**

"Towers of Tomorrow with Lego Bricks" explores STEM, architecture and design concepts at the Science Museum of Virginia. Included with museum admission (\$11 to \$18.50). [smv.org](http://smv.org)

## EVENTS

**7/11-12**

Agriculture displays, artisan vendors and tomato tastings await at the Hanover Tomato Festival at Pole Green Park. The event runs from 5 to 9 p.m. on July 11 and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on July 12. The family-friendly fest is free to attend. [hanovercounty.gov](http://hanovercounty.gov)

**7/11-13**

The Richmond 48 Hour Film Project challenges teams to create a film based on a required genre, character, prop and line of dialogue, all within 48 hours. The event is followed by screenings on July 20 from noon to 5 p.m. at The Park RVA (tickets for each block of films are \$15 to \$18). A Best of Screening is July 27 at The Park RVA (tickets are \$15 to \$18). For participating teams, the regular deadline is July 1 (\$178 to register), and the late deadline is July 10 (\$198 to register). [48hourfilm.com](http://48hourfilm.com)



**7/12-13**

Cosplay World brings workshops, professional cosplayers and costume contests to the Greater Richmond Convention Center from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. July 12 and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 13. Tickets are \$25 per day or \$40 for the weekend. [cosplayworldrichmond.com](http://cosplayworldrichmond.com)

**7/17-20**

Black Pride RVA hosts an Official Kick-off Party, Root Awards ceremony, Day of Purpose Festival, Blacktopia Ball and Pride in the Park gathering. For information about each event, visit [ugrcrva.org](http://ugrcrva.org).

—Compiled by Gray Pershing





## PROFILE

# JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

After releasing a Kickstarter-funded new album, Carbon Leaf plays Maymont

By Adam Cheek

**T**his year, Richmond-based indie rock band Carbon Leaf is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its debut album, "Meander."

Vocalist Barry Privett and company are returning to their local roots for a Music at Maymont concert on Aug. 2 to close out their summer tour.

The quintet has produced 15 studio albums and several shorter music releases. The band's newest record, "Time is the Playground," dropped in September 2024.

Privett says of performing at Maymont, "For us, it's magical. You start playing as the sun's going down, you're in your hometown, and it looks and feels good."

Carbon Leaf's five-member setup formed while they were attending Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, soon landing more gigs at colleges and bars in Richmond after graduation.

"Things grew from there," Privett says. "We had a couple of good strokes of luck and increased our touring base. Before long, we were putting together a national tour and got some songs on the radio."

For Carbon Leaf's latest album, "Time is the Playground," the band organized a Kickstarter campaign.

"Whenever we've done the 'fan-funded' thing, it's never, 'We need this amount of money,'" Privett says. "We know what things are going to cost. It's about offering fun, connection things with fans, to try to involve them in the process a little bit."

The pandemic put a tour on hold and extended the album's turnaround, but that "melted time" became the album's theme — from new concepts to using old, abandoned song ideas.

"Time became this strange meeting

of the old and the new," he says. "I pulled an old Post-it note out of my folder that I had written down, like 15 years ago, and it said, 'time is the playground.' I knew, immediately, that that was going to be the title of the album. It gave me my true North Star of the record's theme: time is the playground; this is what we have — and what are you going to do with it?"

As such, Privett points out that each song deals with time. Following their Maymont stop, the band will kick off their "I Want to Be Leaf Tour," the name inspired by "The X-Files," in late September.

"It'll be exciting because fans have had time to live with the record and mark their favorite songs," Privett says. "I encourage

people to [listen while taking] a 50-minute drive or walk and see how it strikes you, because that's how it was designed. It has this throughline. I refer to time as this line that moves into and out of you, and it keeps going. And this is your moment in time. I treated the album like that."

He says the band's style is a mix of rock, indie folk and other influences, but that it's hard to pin down.

"We named an album 'Ether-Electrified Porch Music,'" he says. "We were like, 'Oh well, that's as close as we'll get to a descriptor.'"

As for Carbon Leaf's Richmond roots, the band continues to see the music scene evolve each time they play in the region.

"That's the beauty of a local culture," Privett says. "It's always changing. It's exciting to see the next class of artists breaking out of the local bubble."

Pointing to the large number of venues available to musicians in the area, Privett says, "You'd be surprised at some places across the country that don't even have that. So, support your local music." **R**

Carbon Leaf performs as part of the "Music at Maymont" series on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$30. For more information, visit [musicatmaymont.com](http://musicatmaymont.com).



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## READING LIST

Creative Minds Publications celebrates 20 years with 20 books

By Nicole Cohen

**T**his year marks a major milestone: 20 years in business for Richmond-based publishing company Creative Minds Publications. To celebrate, the business is giving 20 local debut authors an opportunity to see their manuscript developed into a finished product.

Founded by author, literacy consultant and reading specialist Kathryn Starke, the business first began as a conduit to help publish and market her children's story, "Amy's Travels," the first picture book to teach kids all seven continents.

"In 2005, believe it or not children's books were only done really by Simon & Schuster, Random House and Scholastic," Starke says. "Even the companies around here that have been doing children's books for the last 10 years, they weren't for the last 20 years, so I started the company for that purpose."

Over its history, CMP has evolved to

focus more on publishing, though it does offer literacy consultancy services. This year is their most ambitious to date, with the goal of a 20-book push. Typically, the company averages five to 10 releases annually. It primarily releases children's, middle grade and YA books, self-help titles, memoirs, and women's fiction.

As part of this year's goal, selected authors will receive a discounted collaborative agreement, and CMP will purchase the first 100 copies of their book for the writer to use for anything from promotion to direct sales; however they see fit. One manuscript in the batch will be published at zero cost. "We help with everything all the steps of the way, from taking that idea through the editing ... to the actual book launch," Starke says. "People have this dream, but then how

do you make the dream come to fruition? And I think me having been an author myself and staring at 1,500 copies of 'Amy's Travels,' I learned how to do this from myself doing it."

One of the selected authors is Elaine Honeycutt, a Midlothian mom and high school English teacher who wrote "Chop it Chip: Quest of a Ninja Chef," which released in May. The book follows a young chef as he travels the world learning about different cultures and local dishes. After doing some research on a publisher, she felt CMP was a good fit. "I really like that Kathryn was a teacher and an educator. I also really, really liked that it was a local business," Honeycutt says. "I felt like I wanted to have face-to-face contact with the person who was working with me ... so that was really appealing."

Richmond muralist Sir James L. Thornhill's accepted manuscript is a civil rights journal and coloring book, titled "Journey Beyond the Walls," featuring his street art around the Jackson Ward neighborhood. He says the book is geared towards children and adults, and it explores the stories behind the people he memorializes in his art. "Each one of those coloring pages are of the murals that we painted, and then it has some questions in there of different things from history and some facts in there also," Thornhill says. "It's like a walkthrough timeline of history and great people who have accomplished things." The book is scheduled to be released in late August.

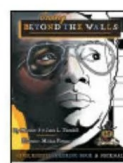
The deadline for submissions to be a part of the 20 selected authors is

Aug. 15, but Starke notes CMP accepts submissions on a rolling basis, so people are still welcome to submit for traditional publication.

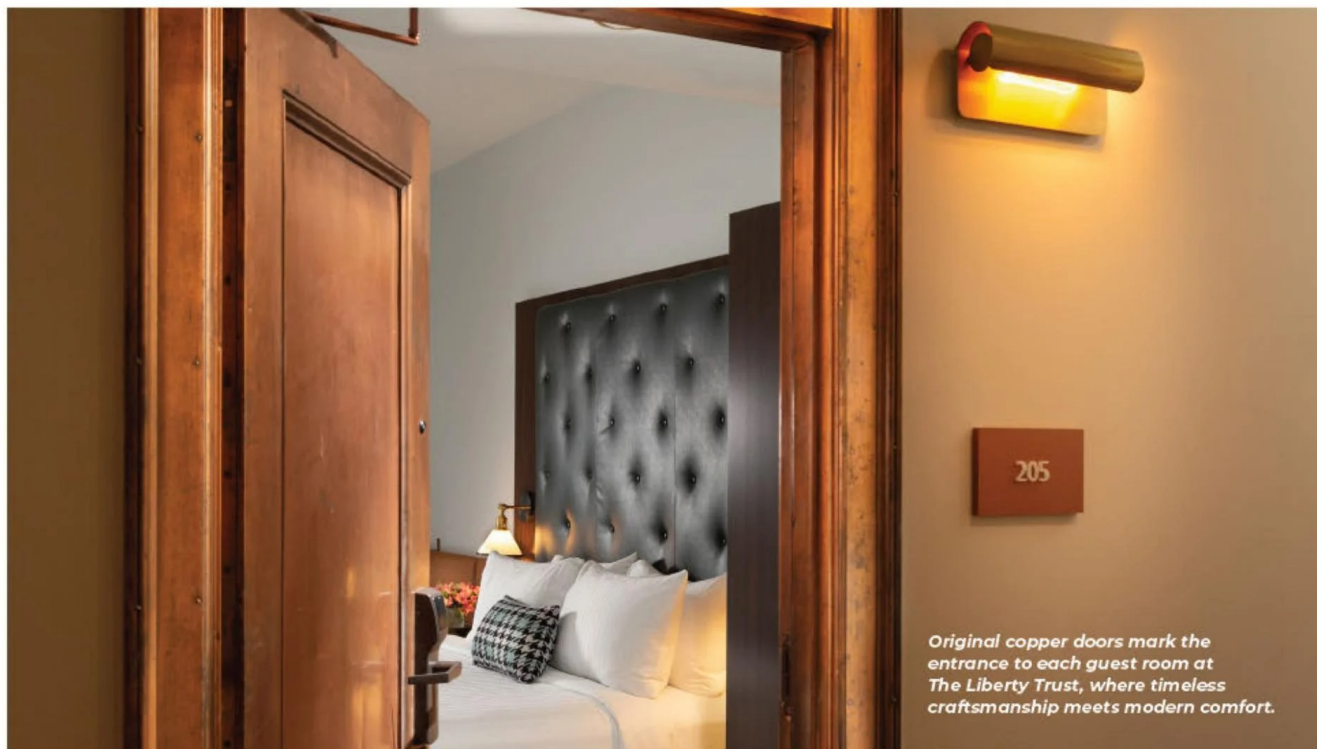
Starke says, "I love that we can share this out with the masses, with Richmonders, because I feel like there's a lot of buried talent there." **R**



Donna Dalton's "Two Mice in the Bahamas" and Sir James L. Thornhill's "Journey Beyond the Walls" are two titles being published under Creative Minds Publications' 20-book push.







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Architecturally impressive, the building showcases a blend of Greek Revival and French Ecole de Beaux-Arts influences. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and recognized as a Virginia Historic Landmark, the structure was once celebrated for its cutting-edge fire-proof construction and innovative plumbing and heating systems. Today, it perfectly blends modern comforts with timeless elegance.

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That same local pride extends to The Vault at The Liberty Trust, the hotel's signature lobby-level restaurant and bar. A love of travel and global flavors inspires the menu, while local ingredients and regional touches shine throughout. Guests can savor artfully crafted dishes, decadent desserts, thoughtfully curated cocktails, craft beers and international wines.



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## PROFILE

# MUSIC ROOTS

The Head and the Heart returns to Richmond with a new album

By Peter McElhinney



**T**he return of transcontinental alt-folk band The Head and the Heart, who play the Allianz Amphitheater at Riverfront on Aug. 1, is a homecoming in more ways than one. The group includes players from many parts of the country — including Richmond — who coalesced in 2009 during open mic nights at a Seattle pub. After a self-produced debut powered by intelligent and introspective lyrics, they rose to the level of stadium-headlining, major label artists. The centrifugal forces of fame often tear bands apart. It revived and refocused The Head and the Heart.

Their new album, “Aperture,” is a return to the organic, acoustic sound of the band’s earliest recordings. “Our mission is to expose and give voice to emotions not often present in modern pop

music,” says drummer Tyler Williams. “We are in a time when things can get really dark really fast. This album is about choosing to let the light in, focusing on the good that is out there in the world, with hope and positivity for the future.”

Williams has been with the band from the beginning, moving to Seattle in time to record the debut album after an invitation from high school friend, guitarist and vocalist Jonathan Russell; the two previously played in RVA band Silent Film Star. Now, both are back in Richmond, Russell residing in an 18th-century farmhouse across the street from The Brink Recording Studio (located in the former Montrose studio space).

Eight of the 12 songs on “Aperture” were recorded at The Brink. “The band

came and stayed with me, like a big family,” Williams says. “It felt like we were back in the Seattle days when we all lived, ate, went on walks and made music together. It was super, back to our roots and creatively fulfilling.”

After making the first album — which has since gone platinum with over a million copies sold — the inertia of success started to build. Their sophomore release, “Let’s Be Still,” took six months to write and record. It became a fan favorite, particularly the song “Another Story” which was inspired by the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting. The momentum also led to a contract with Warner Bros. “That is the chapter of the band where there were outside influences,” Williams says. The production became slicker, cinematic and commercial. “There were outsiders involved. It wasn’t just six people in a room making music,” he says. “We put out songs we really believed in, but it was missing a wholehearted commitment to the mission of the band, [to] the things we do so well.”

For the band, a Richmond performance always feels like a homecoming. “This is where Jon and I started out. We have so many friends and family in the area, and we haven’t played here in about three years,” Williams says. “There is something about our music, an alchemy in playing outdoors. Richmond is such a creative and loving place we are always excited to get back to.”

The “Aperture Tour” sees the band traveling across the U.S. and Canada with its one Virginia stop being the Allianz Amphitheater show. The Head and the Heart is part of the

inaugural lineup of more than 30 shows at the brand-new outdoor music venue, which hosted its first concert in June.

The band’s optimistic uncertainty in renewal is evident from the new album’s bittersweet opener, “After the Setting Sun.” It is an adult song haunted by mortality and burnished by experience. Time and people slip away, but with each ending, there’s a new beginning. **R**

The Head and the Heart performs at the Allianz Amphitheater at Riverfront on Aug. 1 at 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$30. For more information, visit [allianzamphitheater.com](http://allianzamphitheater.com).





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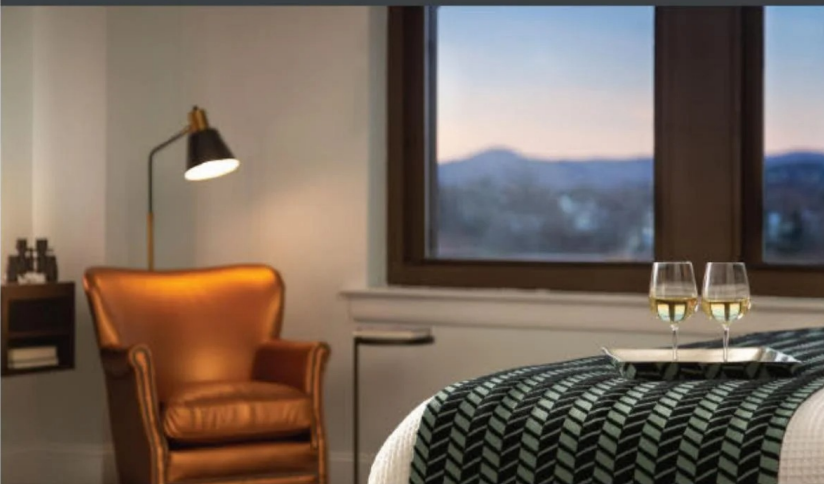
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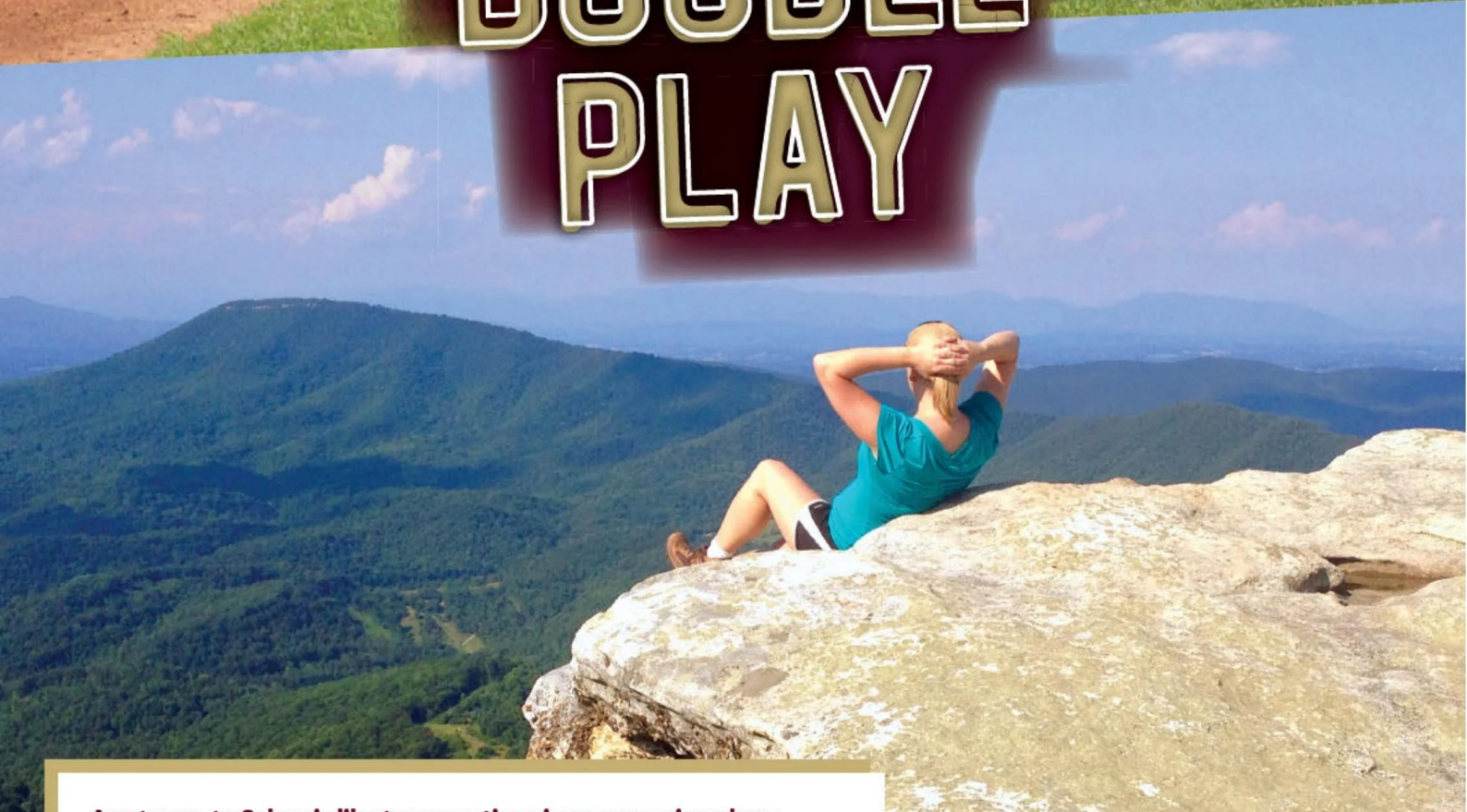
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# LIVING

Cashley Crump,  
owner of Rug & Roll  
in Shockoe Bottom



HANNAH K

Get floored at  
Rug & Roll  
P. 90

Fashion gives  
back at Wear RVA  
P. 86

Edible education  
in the 6th District  
P. 88

Seeing Roanoke's  
side streets  
P. 92

Getting boys  
back on track  
P. 94

Edited by KEVIN JOHNSON



## STYLE

# PHILANTHROPY AND POISE

Wear RVA's fashion show champions wellness for teen girls

By Kaitlin Davis



[From left] Amber Kay Pelletier, Taylor Pitera and Ekaterina Stepanova at the 2025 Wear RVA fashion event

**T**his past May, 44 high school girls from the Richmond region transformed into runway stars, strutting flashy looks at the well-adorned Dover Hall in Manakin-Sabot in front of a sold-out crowd. The night was about more than the outfits, though.

Wear RVA, the nonprofit that hosts "Rocking The Runway For A Cause," held their sixth event since launching in 2017. Co-founders Amber Kay Pelletier and Taylor Pitera started the organization to help young women discover the power of fashion while also raising funds for scholarships and causes locally and nationwide, expanding the event every year by choosing a new charity to champion.

"If you would have told us back [in 2017]

what the show would become, I think we both would have told you, 'You're crazy,'" Pelletier says. Since their first event, Wear RVA has donated more than \$30,000 in scholarships for girls in the runway show and enlisted more than 250 teenagers in their mission to foster confidence in local girls.

Months before the show took place, Pelletier, Pitera and a team of professional models worked with the participants to help them prepare for their event and provide positive support. Through this, Pelletier says, the girls created tight bonds.

"We have some pretty strict policies in place about how they have to treat each other and how we build each other up as a community," Pelletier says. "Girls that never knew each other before doing Wear RVA have become crazy close friends."

This year, the event supported the Virginia Treatment Center for Children. Based out of the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, the VTCC provides inpatient and outpatient care and supports academic research on issues impacting youth. The founders chose the VTCC for the 2025 event after learning about how the youth mental health crisis has impacted the girls they work with.

Dr. Ekaterina Stepanova, associate professor and division chief of child and adolescent psychiatry, says the donated proceeds from the show will greatly help the VTCC's academic mission.

"We also want to make sure that we lead the national research efforts into trying to understand other mental health disorders and find more effective treatments," Stepanova says. "Unfortunately, these efforts really depend on our community and the support that we receive."

Not long after this spring's event, Pelletier and Pitera have already begun planning next year's showcase and hope to add even more models in the future.

"You do not have to be a model. You don't have to have any experience, you don't have to have a particular body type," Pelletier says. "We want you if you want to be there. [We're], quite frankly, just trying to build their self-confidence." **11**

This year's runway featured 44 local high schoolers.



MICHAEL HOSTETLER, COURTESY WEAR RVA





The Highland County Fair, courtesy Sky Pics, LLC

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Chef Steve Glenn,  
Smart Soul Food  
instructor and Culinary  
Director of UGK  
Community First

## SOUL FOOD SCHOOLING

A cooking nonprofit brings healthy eats to 6th District residents

By Joan Tupponce

When Jasmine Sheffield was told to use Greek yogurt in a dumpling recipe, she was skeptical. Her concerns dissipated after sampling the finished product — chicken a la king with cheddar drop dumplings — at Smart Soul Food, a pilot program aimed to educate residents of Richmond's 6th District in cooking skills and healthy eating.

"It was amazing," says Sheffield, a teacher and North Side resident who has attended two separate sets of classes through the program: one with her students at Woodville Elementary and one session for older adults with her grandmother.

Launched in January under a contract with the City of Richmond, Smart Soul Food provides residents with cooking tips, recipes and take-home ingredients during cooking classes held in multi-week sessions. The effort is managed by UGK Community First, a local nonprofit established in 2020 to support food insecure children, families and older adults through community-based feeding and educational programs.

The program is supported by partners like VCU Health, specifically dietitians from the School of Nursing and the Community Health program, and Shalom Farms. "[We] couldn't do this without the participation of VCU," says UGK's director Micheal Sparks.

Sparks hopes to see the program

work for residents and grow as new partners are brought into the fold. "We want this to be consistent and see outcomes," he says, adding that it's not only about the ability for families to get "fresh clean food but to also do something with it."

The pilot program, held at the Annie Marie Giles Resource Center, has hosted over 200 families and seniors since January and plans to host another 200 this fall. For Sparks, the aim is that Smart Soul Food will be citywide by the end of the year.

Chef Steve Glenn, culinary director of UGK Community First and a finalist on season 20 of Fox's "Hell's Kitchen," creates recipes based on seasonal availability, ease of preparation and nutritional value.

"The key to success is Chef Glenn teaching parents to cook healthy meals with the family. Nutritional meals are the best treatments to recovery for all that troubles the body, mind and soul," says 6th District Councilwoman Ellen Robertson, who was instrumental in helping UGK bring their classes to the East End.

Glenn encourages participants to make more from-scratch foods rather than pre-made items to avoid unnecessary sodium and sugar.

"For our senior community, we tend to lean towards designing low-carb [and] low-sodium recipes to battle diabetes and hypertension," he says, noting he chose the chicken and dumplings Sheffield made to put a new spin on a classic recipe. "The addition of Greek yogurt to the dumpling mix adds some more healthy protein to the recipe while also allowing for the dumplings to maintain a light, fluffy texture."

For Sheffield, the classes were helpful in developing her cooking skills and added new snacks and meals to her recipe book. "I would attend the classes again because I enjoyed it," she says. "I looked forward to it each week." **U**





## GRAYSON COUNTY

The 2025 Grayson County Ag & Art Adventure, set for September 6-7, offers a weekend of exploration, creativity and Appalachian community. This free, self-guided tour features working farms and local artists across scenic Southwest Virginia. Saturday includes farm visits, artist demonstrations and hands-on activities from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Sunday, head to the Historic 1908 Courthouse in Independence for the Legends of Grayson Tribute Concert honoring Enoch Rutherford, with live music, food trucks and artisan booths starting at 1 p.m. Experience Grayson County's rich agricultural roots and vibrant arts scene this fall!

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## STEP ON IT

Take on textiles at the city's first rug-making studio

By Rachel Kester

**R**ichmond is in no short supply of creative crafters willing to share their passions; mug-makers, woodworkers, stained glass smiths and more open their studios to beginner artisans. Rug & Roll has been teaching the intriguing art of rug tufting since January 2024. Located at 1810 E. Main St., guests learn how to tuft custom textile projects that range from rugs to smaller artistic expressions like keyboard covers.

The only public-facing workshop of its kind locally, the business was founded by Cashley Crump, who has been professionally rug tufting for four years.

"My inspiration for creating Rug & Roll comes from my love for hands-on creative projects and the therapeutic process of making something from scratch," says Crump, who also instructs the workshops. "I wanted to offer a space where people can tap into their creativity, learn a new skill, and create something beautiful and functional."



Projects from a mini rug workshop

A crafter uses a tufting gun at a Rug & Roll workshop



In Crump's studio, the emphasis is on bold, bright and unique projects. Participants are free to design and tuft to their heart's desire, whether that's striking geometric shapes, a cartoon character or a favorite flower, all done through small group sessions with one-on-one assistance.

"Throughout the workshop, instructors provide tips and tricks, answer questions, and give feedback on participants' work," Crump says. "It's a collaborative, creative environment where participants can share ideas and inspire each other."

Apart from their mini rug workshops, where participants make small-scale designs, most sessions start by choosing an image to recreate in rug form; before the class, this gets pre-sketched onto monk's cloth — a cotton fabric with a basketweaving pattern that acts as a base — so the outline is ready for the upcoming session.

Guests are introduced to the materials and tools of the trade, such as the tufting gun which pushes yarn through the monk's cloth to create cut piles. Next, following the pattern and swap-

ping out colors and materials, the tufting begins. "This is the most hands-on part of the workshop, where participants can experiment with different techniques to create texture, patterns and designs," Crump says. The rug is completed with a backing and a once-over with scissors or shears, smoothing the pile and adding depth.

While many might come to rug tufting as a creative escape, Crump finds the art form can encourage so much more. "Like many crafts, tufting can be meditative. The repetitive nature of tufting can help reduce stress, increase mindfulness and promote relaxation," Crump says. "Tufting your own rug can be a more eco-friendly option [and] you can design it exactly how you want, making it perfect for any space."

Rug & Roll's class offerings include three-hour beginner's workshops, intermediate classes and mini workshops focused on smaller tufting projects. The studio also offers private sessions for groups and DIY sessions for experienced tufters. Kids ages eight and up are also allowed to participate under parental guidance. **R**



# Congratulations

to **Richmond magazine's** staff and freelancers for 25 wins in the 2024 **Virginia Press Association** News and Advertising Contest, including a Best in Show award and a News Sweepstakes award.



We'd also like to extend **congratulations** to freelance writer **Joan Tupponce**, whose Sunday Stories won four awards at the state level of the 2025 National Federation of Press Women's National Communications Contest. Her two first-place winners will now compete at the national level.



**Pictured:** Harry Kollatz Jr. (senior writer), Heather Palmateer, Adam Cheek, Jay Paul (senior photographer), Mindy Kinsey (editorial director), Justin Chesney and Carson McNamara (winner, Best in Show Specialty Graphics, Illustration and Art). **Not pictured:**

Sarah Barton, James Callahan, Bird Cox, Ash Daniel, Claire Fortier, Stephanie Ganz, Zaid Hamid, Don Harrison, Julianne Tripp Hillian, Rachel Lee, Mandy Loy (online editor), Eileen Mellon (food editor), Phong Nguyen, Genevelyn Steele, Kyle Talley (associate art director), Fred Turko and Justin Vaughan (creative director).

**Richmond**  
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## TRAVEL

# Tour Like a Townie

Roanoke's neighborhoods show a slow side of the Star City

By Kevin Johnson

**R**ichmonders are no strangers to Roanoke's charms. The city's recent accolades — named in multiple publications as one of the country's best outdoors towns, a cultural hub for Southwest Virginia and a regional foodie haven — have been drawing curious Central Virginians to eat, drink and play for many years.

But repeat visits call for closer inspection, and devoting time to the Star City's side streets rewards travelers with a strain of Southern hospitality that's distinctly off the beaten path.

## RALEIGH COURT/ GRANDIN VILLAGE

Established in 1906, the Raleigh Court neighborhood and its nexus, Grandin Village, was Roanoke's first suburb. Not long after came the **Grandin Theatre**, a landmark in the area that first opened in 1932 and, after 70 years of fits and starts, found a steady revival in 2002. Since then, the theater has hosted first-run and second-run movies across its multiple screens, as well as talks, live music and a youth-focused film education program.

From the theater, head down Grandin Road to find shopping and dining opportunities. **The Roanoke Co+op** carries major producers and local growers alike, offering a taste of the Valley's produce,



dairy and more. Swing by **Too Many Books** to browse a selection of pre-loved fiction and nonfiction that lives up to the store's name.

The neighborhood isn't lacking for standout bites, either. **Scratch Biscuit Co.** puts the "Southern" in Raleigh Court's charm, serving up an array of platters and sandwiches, even branching out to tacos and brunch fare, along with vegetarian and gluten-free options. Evening spots include **Taaza Indian Cuisine**, pizza parlor **Grace's Place** and laid-back cocktail lounge **Show Pony**.

## CRYSTAL SPRING

On the edge of the Roanoke River near downtown, Crystal Spring is bordered by mountains to the south and east, train tracks to the west and the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital to the north. Residents and visitors alike can spend time at the landmark **Mill Mountain** and visit the famous 100-foot neon star that lights up Roanoke's night sky or traverse the miles of biking and hiking trails up and down the mountain. For fun at a lower elevation, **River's Edge Park** offers sports fields, a playground and access to the Roanoke River Greenway network.

Fuel up for your next adventure at **Sweet Donkey Coffee House**, a local

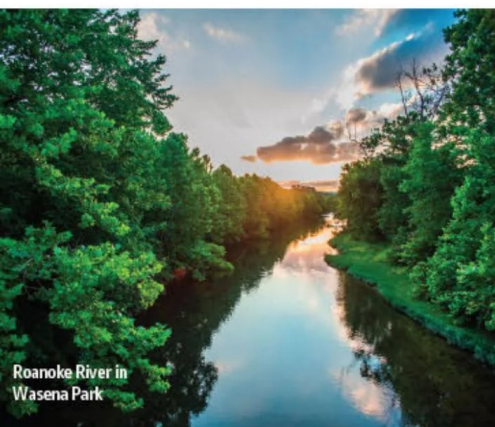
favorite in a converted historic home that adds to the friendly neighborhood feel. Plan your outing around its monthly live music and food truck series.

On Crystal Spring Avenue, a trio of food-focused businesses from chef Tyler Thomas keep the area lively. **The River and Rail Restaurant**, opened in 2012, was the first concept from Thomas, focusing on Southern fare made with local ingredients. In 2020, Thomas and his team revamped local grocery institution Tinnell's Finer Foods on the same block into **Crystal Spring Grocery Co.**, a lunch and dinner destination with a gourmet market attached. The following year, they opened **Yard Bull Meats** between the two storefronts, a butcher shop sourcing product from regional farms. >



FROM TOP: JENNIFER HAYWARD; COURTESY VISIT VBR





Roanoke River in Wasena Park

## WASENA

To the east of Raleigh Court, Wasena's network of early 20th-century homes has been a convenient commuter suburb for some time — though its main thoroughfare, the Wasena Bridge, is currently under construction to be replaced and access is expected to reopen in spring 2026. The neighborhood has built an identity all its own in recent years, one that's worth minor detours.

Wasena's riverside location has made it a recreation destination; **Wasena Park** will host the city's upcoming in-river whitewater park, a set of rapids for kayakers, tubers and more expected to open in 2026. **The Roanoke River Greenway's** midpoint sits in the backyard of **Roanoke Mountain Adventures**, a bike shop, outdoor gear vendor and rental hub for all types of activities. The quickest way to get a sense of the urban greenway is by e-bike, available for rent or through a guided tour from the business.

The small town feel of Wasena's Main Street has attracted some of the city's most notable chefs. **Bloom**, a restaurant and wine bar from Nate Sloan, opened in 2019 with a focus on hyper-seasonal menus that kicked off growth in the Wasena neighborhood. Coffee house **Roasters Next Door** opened the same year across the street, where chef and Richmond native Quincy Randolph crafts creative drinks, breakfast and lunch items, and baked goods. **Kind Baking Co.**, which opened on Main Street in 2021, found success with staple baked goods such as cakes, cookies and scones and is currently relocating — and becoming neighbors of Roasters Next Door — with plans to expand into breads, salads and sandwiches. **R**

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with Jenn White



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BY LAURA  
ANDERS LEE

## FAMILY

## LEFT BEHIND

While girls are making headway, boys are losing ground

**'G**irls rule and boys drool." I confess to saying this a time or two as a child. I made straight A's, kept a ridiculously neat backpack and turned in assignments not just on time, but early. Meanwhile, I had no tolerance for the boys. Their behavior was disruptive, their homework was late and their binders weren't even organized by subject.

But now, as the mother of two adolescent boys, I'm much more sympathetic.

I've recently been following the work of Richard Reeves, an author and researcher who spoke at The Richmond Forum this spring. During his talk, he shared startling data showing how far boys have fallen behind girls in the classroom and beyond.

Generally speaking, girls have a much higher GPA average than boys. Two out of three students in the top 10% of the class are female, while two out of three students in the bottom 10% of the class are male. Boys are being diagnosed with learning disabilities at five times the rate of girls. And in every U.S. state, girls are more likely to graduate from high school and receive a college degree. In fact, the gender gap today among college graduates is the same as it was in 1972, just in reverse. That's a lot to take in.

During his time in Richmond, Reeves was careful not to downplay the challenges women still face, while explaining why boys need our attention, too.

"Gender equality is not a zero-sum game," he said. In other words, daughters



and sons need support and advocacy.

As for how boys ended up on the back foot, one case Reeves made was an unfair grading system in schools. Teachers tend to reward focus and organization, traits that come earlier and easier for girls. He said schools should rely less on homework and behavior-based grading and more on actual learning outcomes.

"Girls are not smarter than boys; boys are not smarter than girls," he said. "But girls do develop that frontal cortex, which is the bit of your brain that turns in your chemistry homework, earlier than boys. It's not his fault — he's not defective in some way. There's just a difference in maturity."

Since his book "Of Boys and Men" was published in 2022, Reeves has brought these important issues to the national stage. But locally, some all-boys schools have been working toward innovative solutions for a long time.

"Some of the challenges Richard Reeves described are often tied to expectations placed on kids that have little to do with their academic or personal growth ...

and don't align with how many boys learn best," says Will Murphy, assistant head of school and teacher at Seven Hills School, an all-boys middle school.

Murphy says it's important to keep boys engaged in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways, from sports and outdoor play to hands-on experiences and real-world connections. The school employs a faculty that is 85% male, which Murphy says adds another important layer of connection. By comparison, just 23% of middle school teachers nationwide are male, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

St. Christopher's School founded The Center for the Study of Boys in 2014 to focus on best practices for educating and raising boys.

"We know that boys tend to fall behind girls in terms of the developmental trajectory and that many boys struggle with executive function," says Kim Hudson, a school administrator and the center's director. "It's important to understand that their timeline is different. We should not demonize or pathologize that, but respect and >





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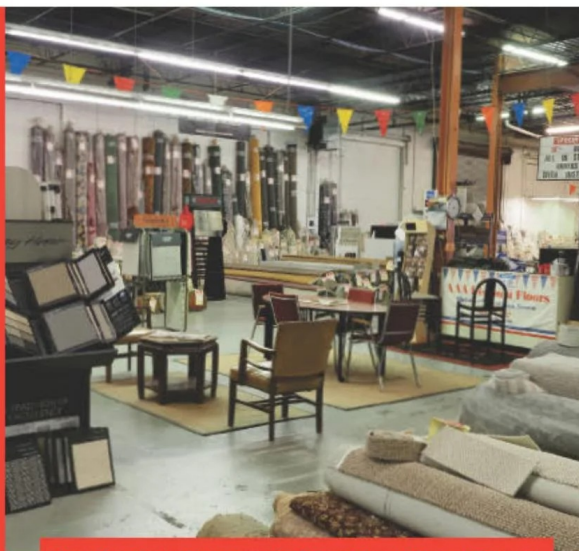
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honor that.”

Hudson says it's also crucial to provide structure while holding boys accountable. She recommends that parents check their children's school binders weekly, create visual reminders and set small, achievable goals for everything from cleaning their room to completing homework. She also notes that failures are just as much a part of their journey as success.

“When you swoop in to save the day, they aren't going to learn the hard lessons they need,” she says.

Richard Reeves also spoke on the importance of fostering positive masculinity — in other words, helping boys connect to themselves and others and be comfortable with their authentic selves.

“  
**In fact, the gender gap today among college graduates is the same as it was in 1972, just in reverse.**”

That means sharing feelings and raw emotions that society oftentimes discourages.

Murphy says parents can provide support at home by keeping their relationships open and free of judgement and being patient for the ups and downs during this time of accelerated growth.

Hudson recommends checking in often with boys to see what they are thinking and feeling. “We tend to put boys in a corner and say they are a certain way, but it's really important to understand that each boy as a human is unique and complex,” she says.

This is all good advice and wisdom I'll carry with me into the school year. Richard Reeves has said that resilience is built through experience, not protection. I'll give my boys the space to stumble, then address their setbacks from a place of love and understanding, and work to create a routine and small goals that can be accomplished on their own. As my friend Alison Martin says, “They're half-baked cakes.” Our boys will get there. They're just not quite done. **B**

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# 'To Build a Happy Place'

KINGS DOMINION CELEBRATES  
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By DALE M. BRUMFIELD

Kings Dominion under construction, circa 1973

COURTESY KINGS DOMINION



## A little after 9 a.m. on May 10, 1975,

28-year-old Kings Dominion General Manager Dennis Spiegel looked out at a mass of approximately 52,000 people, crushed elbow-to-elbow into an area designed to hold about one-third that many. At the front gate, which had been closed and locked to stop the influx, another frustrated crowd, estimated at 25,000 to 40,000, many wielding discount tickets from a wildly successful McDonald's promotion, clamored to get in. Out on Interstate 95 and on Route 1, traffic was gridlocked northbound from Ashland and southbound from Carmel Church. State and county police had seen nothing like it.

With the full park scheduled to open at 10 a.m., Spiegel wondered, how did this happen? It wasn't even opening day — that was last weekend, May 3 and 4, with crowds numbering half this many. Was he about to be the first theme park manager in history to close a park before it even opened? Nervously, Spiegel made a bold executive decision.

### 'Park Plans in Hanover Kept Quiet'

—*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Nov. 19, 1971

Four years earlier, in November 1971, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* had reported that a team from Taft Broadcasting was evaluating a parcel of land in Doswell to determine the feasibility of constructing a multimillion-dollar amusement park. Taft was a Cincinnati-based media company that owned radio and TV stations, as well as production companies such as Hanna-Barbera, the animation studio behind the *Flintstones*, *Scooby-Doo*, *Yogi Bear* and others. It was opening a flagship park called Kings Island north of Cincinnati to replace the aging and flood-prone Coney Island (named for but unrelated to New York's famed amusement park).

In May 1972, Family Leisure Centers, a subsidiary of Taft and Kroger's Top Value Enterprises, was tasked with developing the 700-acre tract into a \$25 million family recreational complex. An early concept drawing shows an amusement park, a resort hotel, an 18-hole golf course and a shopping center. Like most concept plans, it displays the dream for the project; all but the park eventually fell by the wayside.

Spiegel says Taft had hoped to find a location near Washington, D.C., to attract more visitors from the north, but there were benefits to constructing the park in Hanover County. "Land was cheap. I think we paid about \$2,500 per acre," he says of the vast tract, which included several small brick homes, a few stagnant ponds, a pig farm and two family cemeteries (both left undisturbed), one with a grave marker dated 1710. There were fewer zoning and environmental restrictions and easy access to I-95. The location also was strategically positioned within driving distance of both D.C. and Richmond, enabling Kings Dominion to attract visitors from two significant population centers.

Taft wasn't the only company looking to build in Virginia — Busch Gardens Williamsburg, which became a prominent but friendly competitor for the Richmond and Tidewater markets, was under construction just 65 miles southeast on I-64. Roanoke's Lakeside Amusement Park had purchased an enormous tract near Martinsville for a park called Sugartree that never got past the planning stage. The Marriott Corporation was also looking to build a park near Manassas to complement its existing parks in Chicago and Santa Clara, California, but wealthy horse-country neighbors who did not want an influx of tourists in their backyards thwarted those plans.

### 'Thrills — and Spills — in the "Theme Park" Business'

—*Fortune* magazine, December 1977

The early 1970s marked a major cultural shift away from traditional



## 1975

Kings Dominion opened to the public on May 3 with five themed areas: International Street, Old Virginia, Coney Island, The Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera and Lion Country Safari. Attractions included the Rebel Yell, Galaxie and Scooby-Doo roller coasters, Log Flume, a Steam Train, Sky Ride, and the Eiffel Tower.



## 1977

The King Cobra roller coaster debuted, featuring a 75-foot drop, and the movie "Rollercoaster" was filmed at the park.

## 1979

Lost World mountain opened, featuring three rides: Journey to Atlantis, Land of the Dooz and the Time Shaft. A year later, Haunted River would replace Journey to Atlantis.

COURTESY KINGS DOMINION



amusement parks to what became known as theme parks. Pre-1970s amusement parks, such as Virginia's Buckroe Beach, Lakeside and Ocean View, were primarily amalgams of rides, games and food stands, squeezed into urban corners and often with no unifying appeal. They were loud, garish, maybe even a little seedy, and solely focused on thrill and novelty rides.

Theme parks, in contrast, were immersive environments built around a central thematic concept, such as a geographical location or a culture. Every ride, building and even employee costume was part of a

deliberately coherent aesthetic, with the goal of transporting visitors away from their day-to-day cares into a different, albeit manufactured, reality. Parks evolved into vacation destinations rather than Saturday diversions, and consumers wanted cleaner, safer and more family-friendly environments rather than traditional carnivals or boardwalk parks.

Disney World's 1971 opening set the standard for theme parks as a controlled resort destination with multiple themed lands, hotels and transportation systems. Others followed — Six Flags and Busch Gardens parks started introducing themed elements and

more extravagant landscaping. No more corn dogs and carny rides; this was serious business.

Taft Broadcasting and Family Leisure Centers play an often overlooked role in the development of the theme park industry. It was one of the first non-Disney corporations to make a calculated investment in themed entertainment on a national scale, building or managing several regional parks instead of one megapark. It was also one of the earliest companies to use its own intellectual property (Hanna-Barbera characters) in park design and theming.

**'Hi ho, hi ho, we really would like to go ...'**

—Early Kings Dominion jingle

In May 1972, Hanover County rezoned a portion of the Doswell tract from agricultural to business use. As grading and site preparation began, Taft announced the park's name, Kings Dominion. Spiegel admits he is no fan of the name. "I can say these things 50 years later, but it was a horrible name. >

International Street as seen from the Eiffel Tower, circa 1975



#### 1982

The park unveiled the Grizzly, a high-speed wooden roller coaster with an 87-foot drop. The Showplace, a 7,500-seat outdoor concert venue, also opened.

#### 1983

White Water Canyon, a river adventure with six-person rafts, debuted. Another water ride, Diamond Falls, was added in 1985, and the Racing Rivers water slides opened in 1987.

#### 1986

Shockwave, the first stand-up roller coaster on the East Coast, was introduced.

#### 1988

Avalanche arrived — a bobsled-style family coaster with mountain-mimicking hills and valleys.

#### 1991

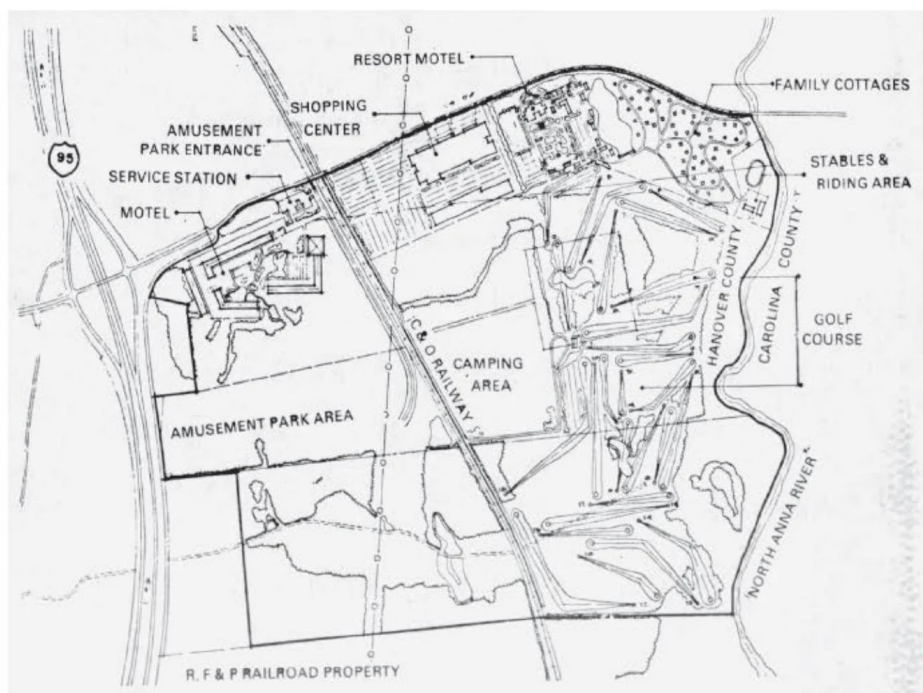
Kings Dominion introduced the Anaconda, a six-loop steel roller coaster and the first in the world to feature an underwater tunnel.





# 'It's always going to be about people.'

—Bridgette Bywater,  
Kings Dominion General  
Manager, 2020-25



With Kings Island, the 'Kings' came from Cincinnati's Kings Mills, and we took 'Island' from Coney Island. Great name. But when we came to Virginia, we carried the 'Kings' forward, and we took the 'Dominion' from the Old Dominion."

He points out that only the sign is visible from I-95, not the park itself. "Traveling tourists didn't know it was a theme park," he says. "[The name] Kings Dominion meant nothing to them."

From 1973 until early 1975, employees and contractors worked feverishly to meet the proposed May 3, 1975, opening date. Debbie Smart, then the wife of rides maintenance supervisor Dale Figley and daughter-in-law of park construction director Jim Figley, recalls the treatment the Cincinnati transplants received from Hanover locals. "We were celebrities," she says. "Dale got a speeding ticket in Ashland. When the police officer found out that he was with Kings Dominion, [the officer] was afraid he was going to get fired by his sergeant."

To meet the schedule, Spiegel, Jim Figley and his brother-in-law, Operations Manager Don Palmer, scoured parks in America, Switzerland, Germany and Italy looking for rides, ride parts and attractions. Figley went to Martins-

A 1972 concept drawing shows Kings Dominion as it was originally envisioned.

ville after the Sugartree project was canceled and purchased stacks of painted lumber intended for a triple racing roller coaster at a significantly reduced price; it was used in the Rebel Yell (now Racer 75).

Spiegel recalls that they bought carousels from Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden in Indiana, Roger Williams Park in Rhode Island, and Palisades Amusement Park in New Jersey. "We bought those things for like a hundred thousand bucks, which was nothing," he says.

During this period, the park's centerpiece — a 331-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower — was constructed to convey the park's international theme and showcase the Taft park brand. Initially, the manufacturer, Intamin, proposed a full-size tower nearly 1,000 feet in height. However, after consideration, they proceeded with a scaled-down design almost identical to the one at Kings Island. The paint color, Eiffel Tower green, was used nowhere else in the park.

## 'The Lions Are Coming'

—Commonwealth Magazine, March 1974

In addition to the rides and attractions, a wildlife preserve called Lion Country Safari was located on the east side of

### 1992

Hurricane Reef, a 6-acre waterpark with 15 water attractions, debuted.

### 1993

The "Days of Thunder" racing simulator ride let guests experience the thrill of driving a race car.

### 1994

The Hurler, the park's fourth wooden roller coaster, opened in a new area styled after "Wayne's World."

### 1996

"The Outer Limits": Flight of Fear premiered as the world's first linear induction launch-style roller coaster, looping through total darkness.

### 1998

The world's fastest suspended roller coaster was introduced: Volcano, The Blast Coaster.



COURTESY KINGS DOMINION



Kings Dominion. "It was a joint operation with a South African firm that had three locations in the U.S.," says Jack Yager, the Kings Dominion public relations manager from 1973 to 1982.

On April 27, 1974, Kings Dominion previewed LCS with a soft opening that included the preserve, a bird show, the Scooby-Doo roller coaster, the Elephant's Trunk gift shop and the Hungry Hippo restaurant. A preview center showed a film titled "To Build a Happy Place," which was shot at Kings Island. Virginia Gov. Mills Godwin attended the opening ceremonies and received a "beak kiss" from a parrot.

Because the animal preserve was, at the time, a drive-thru (no convertibles allowed), guests simply paid an entry fee and drove slowly around the grounds while listening to a cassette narration. This did not go well. According to Yager, cars overheated, lions scratched vehicles, and ostriches plucked at windshield wiper blades. Sometimes guests would stop and get out of their cars, thinking the animals were tame. "Everything that could go wrong did," Yager recalls. By the grand opening in 1975, the drive-thru had been replaced with a monorail. According to Spiegel, the park hosted about 680,000 guests during its preview season.

In addition to LCS and International Street, which featured not just the tower but European-style buildings offering merchandise, games and food service, the other themed areas included Old Virginia, where rides and shows recalled the history and geography of the commonwealth; Coney Island, a re-creation of the sights and sounds of the old amusement park era (renamed Candy Apple Grove in 1976); and a children's area called The Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera. These areas were patterned to match the attractions at Kings Island.

### '70,000? 80,000? 90,000? ... The Weekend That Was In Hanover County'

—Ashland's *The Herald-Progress*, May 14, 1975

Following an expenditure of more than \$50 million (exceeded only by the two Disney parks), Kings Dominion's grand opening was scheduled for Memorial Day weekend 1975, just 10 days before the opening of Busch Gardens Williams-

burg. The event was to include musical performances, a ribbon-cutting ceremony and hot-air balloon displays.

The park was open for trial runs on the weekends of May 3 and May 10. The first weekend was relatively uneventful. Then there was May 10.

Standing on International Street in front of 52,000 people, with thousands more in the parking lot, Spiegel announced his executive decision. "We didn't have any more capacity, and they really started getting rowdy and shaking the gates. We had to let them in. ... We closed the parking lot and opened up the front gate, and we let many go in free."

Employees actually went into the crowds, asking people to please go home and come back another day. At noon, the gates clanged shut for the day.

The park was a cash-only operation in 1975. "At the ticket booths, people would hand us the [\$7.50 admission], and we would just drop it on the floor," Yager says. "If we needed change, we would just reach down and grab bills. I remember Jim Copp, our finance director, opening the back door, using a box to just gather up the bills."

Terrie Blanchard Cook was working that day at a food stand near the Shenandoah Lumber Co. log flume ride. "It was crazy," she recalls. "Late-shift workers were unable to get to work. The walkways were filled with slow-moving swarms of people. A woman made her way to the front of the line at my stand, and when I asked for her order, she broke into tears. She said, 'I thought I was standing in line for the restroom. I've been waiting for over an hour.'"

"At the end of that day, loads of employees ripped off their uniforms, stating that they'd never be back," she adds.

### 'A Nerve-Shattering Disaster Movie That Hurtles Along ...'

—Tagline from the 1977 movie "Rollercoaster"

Attendance normalized after that chaotic weekend, aided by a gas crisis that indirectly benefited the park by keeping Virginians close to home, as well as the Busch Gardens premiere. >

#### 1999

Hurricane Reef was rebranded as WaterWorks and expanded to 19 acres. More water slides were added the following year.



#### 2001

HyperSonic XLC, the world's first compressed air launch roller coaster, was unveiled, and FearFest, a new annual event celebrating Halloween, began.

#### 2002

The park's 12th roller coaster, Ricochet, debuted with twists, turns and a 50-foot drop.

#### 2003

Drop Zone Stunt Tower, the tallest drop tower ride in North America, premiered, plunging guests 27 stories at a speed of 72 miles per hour.



In 1976, Universal Pictures contacted Spiegel and Yager about filming part of a motion picture called "Rollercoaster" at Kings Dominion. Skeptical of the film's plot about an extortionist blowing up roller coasters, Spiegel asked to see the script. He says he was stunned to see that ride operators were stereotyped as whiskey-swilling, bucktoothed bumpkins. He decided to cooperate if the park was paid \$250,000 and he

Kings Dominion attractions starred well-known Hanna-Barbera characters.

was allowed to edit the script. The 1977 film, which starred George Segal, Richard Widmark, Henry Fonda, Timothy Bottoms and Susan Strasberg, was tepidly received

but made back its \$9 million budget.

Kings Dominion continued to grow, adding a fourth coaster, the King Kobra, in 1977 and The Lost World, a 2-acre human-made mountain featuring a water ride, a mine train and a centrifuge ride, in 1979. A campground was built in 1978, but the hotel never materialized.

### 'Betcha Can't Do It All!'

—Kings Dominion tagline, 1981

Attendance and discretionary spending dipped during the recession of the early 1980s, leading to delays in infrastructure improvements, such as parking lot repaving. However, another roller coaster, the Grizzly, was added in 1982, and the White Water Canyon river ride came along the following year. Taft acquired three more parks, bringing its total to five. Spiegel left Kings Dominion to work for Taft, replaced by Lew Hooper and, in 1984, Wilson Flohr.

After cutting his teeth at Disney, Flohr bounced between Kings Island and another Taft property, Carowinds in North Carolina, before co-founding a new venture, Kings Entertainment Company, and buying Taft's theme parks in 1983. "Taft was a broadcasting company," Flohr says. "They were investing a lot of money in Kings Island and Kings Dominion, but Wall Street wasn't recognizing it. So, they decided to sell."

Under KECO and Flohr, Kings Dominion consistently upheld the philosophy that the guest was always right — an approach that may have chafed the guest services employees who had to manage complaints. Flohr remembers an incident



#### 2004-06

Scooby-Doo's Haunted Mansion opened as the first interactive family dark ride in the mid-Atlantic region. Two more themed experiences, Tomb Raider: Firefall (now The Crypt) and Italian Job: Turbo Coaster (now Backlot Stunt Coaster) soon followed.

#### 2008

The Dominator debuted as the longest floorless roller coaster in the world, with one of the largest vertical loops.



#### 2010

Intimidator 305 was unveiled as the biggest and fastest roller coaster on the East Coast.

#### 2014

For its 40th anniversary, Kings Dominion brought back the Candy Apple Grove and the Singing Mushrooms, among other hits, and rebranded the Congo area as Safari Village in honor of Lion Country Safari.

LEFT: THE RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, THE VALENTINE.

COURTESY KINGS DOMINION



where a guest's car was taken from the parking lot. "I was told this guy got his car stolen," he says. "He paid to get it in our parking lot, and we were supposed to take care of it. I said, 'Well, we've got a group sales car here.' So, we literally gave him that car. ... We had to take care of the guest."

### 'Days of Thunder'

—Motion simulator ride added in 1993

KECO sold to Paramount in 1992, which was, in turn, purchased by Viacom in 1994. The parks were transferred to CBS and ultimately sold to Cedar Fair in 2006; the latter merged with Six Flags Entertainment Corporation in 2024.

The changes in ownership, including related intellectual properties, created challenges and opportunities for management. Some refer to the initial sale as the "Paramount purge" because numerous older rides, such as the Apple Turnover, the Old Dominion Line steam train and The Skyride, were removed. Lion Country Safari was shuttered in 1993 due to high operating costs, difficult federal regulations and a realignment of park priorities; all of the animals were safely relocated to other zoos and parks.

Hanna-Barbera Land, which had been expanded in 1990, was renamed KidZville. A "Days of Thunder" motion simulator and "The Outer Limits": Flight of Fear launched coaster were added, as was a "Wayne's World" area. Numerous other movie tie-ins have come and gone.

While the economic downturn of 2008 severely affected park attendance, it also inspired off-season attractions including Halloween Haunt and, later, WinterFest (on hiatus for 2025). Kings Dominion regained momentum with the installation in 2010 of a world-class steel coaster, Intimidator 305, and a rebranding of the kids' area to Planet Snoopy. The park's 40th anniversary saw the return of beloved attractions like the Singing Mushrooms and another expansion of the water park.

However, there was no silver lining to some heartbreaking incidents: Kings Dominion has experienced three accidental deaths and a gang-related stabbing.

And then there was the COVID-19 shutdown.

Bridgette Bywater, general manager of Kings Dominion from 2020 to 2025, says there were numerous challenges during and after the pandemic. Attendance plummeted in 2021 and is still recovering. Planned capital improvements, such as Tumbili, a 4D free-spin coaster, were delayed to control costs. Ride repair parts from European manufacturers have been difficult to find and get shipped.

Bywater credits Cedar Fair, Six Flags and Richard Zimmerman, president and CEO of the merged company, for the successful post-pandemic turnaround, which includes the 2025 debut of Rapterra, the tallest and longest launched wing coaster in America. "[During the pandemic,] we paid our full-time staff that entire time. ... It really changed my whole viewpoint of how much the company meant to me," she says. "It was a very tough decision for Cedar Fair to cover the salaries. But no one was laid off during COVID."

### 'Conquer the Skies'

—Rapterra tagline, 2024

What does Bywater anticipate for Kings Dominion over the next 50 years, now that it is part of Six Flags' expansive network of 42 parks?

"It's about acknowledging and wrapping our arms around our history as we're stepping forward into our future," she replies after some reflection. "We can't just hold on to the past and be able to grow. I think we'll continue to see how far they'll push computer programming in the rides.

"But it's always going to be about people. It's about embracing technology but also being able to make the experience much more enjoyable and meaningful to guests who are on the attraction, whether it is a giant, beautiful roller coaster like Rapterra or even a small family ride that's just accomplishing getting a grandma and grandson in together for a good time." ■

Dale Brumfield was a full-time employee at Kings Dominion from 1981 to 1999.

#### 2015

WaterWorks was rebranded as Soak City, and two new attractions were added: Hurricane Heights water slide complex and Splash Island family zone.

#### 2018

Twisted Timbers, a hybrid roller coaster made from wood and steel, opened and the WinterFest holiday celebration debuted. Grand Carnivale, another off-season event, was introduced the following year.

#### 2022

Tumbili was unveiled; it uses state-of-the-art magnetic technology to suspend riders on either side of the track as cars spin and tumble continuously.

#### 2025

Kings Dominion celebrates its 50th anniversary with the debut of Rapterra, the world's tallest and longest launched wing coaster.





# NATIONAL POLICY,



# LOCAL IMPACT

**SIX MONTHS OF FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS HIT HOME**

By Tharon Giddens, Mindy Kinsey, Harry Kollatz Jr., Mark Newton, Ian Stewart and Joan Tupponce



## FOOD AID: MORE NEED, LESS SUPPLY

On May 22, 613 households visited the St. Thomas Food Pantry in North Side in three hours, setting a new record.

"That was a substantial jump," Director Kristin Cummings says. The pantry usually serves 450 to 500 households per day. If first-quarter numbers for 2025 — 12,289 individuals and 5,528 households served — continue at the same pace, year-end numbers will reach new highs, she adds.

Cummings is worried that she'll have more people seeking food and less of it to give out, because the U.S. Department of Agriculture cut two Biden-era programs that guaranteed income for farmers while providing fresh food to underserved communities: Local Food for Schools, which had a \$660 million budget, and the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement, which helped food banks with its \$420 billion budget. The announcement came in March.

USDA monies pay for about 25% of the food distributed at the St. Thomas Food Pantry. The only way to offset that loss without pausing aid is to rush to diversify food sources and grant funding. "We are trying to bring in more sources, like grocery stores and urban farms such as Shalom Farms," Cummings says.

Why has need increased? "Prices are higher, and people are affected by the loss of jobs. They are stressed about what's happening with what's going on in the government. They are worried: What if SNAP goes away or Social Security goes away?" Cummings says.

David Waidelich, Feed More's chief collaboration and programs officer, is seeing the same upward trend. "Last year, our 380-plus distribution partners had more than 1.2 million neighbor visits," he says.

The people visiting food banks and pantries aren't those you might expect. "Most are hardworking families juggling multiple jobs. They visit a few times a year

Kristin Cummings, director of St. Thomas Food Pantry in Ginter Park



when food prices spike or an unexpected expense, like car trouble or medical bills, forces them to choose between nutritious groceries for their kids or paying rent," Waidelich says. "Others are seniors who've worked hard their whole lives but lack the mobility to prepare a meal, struggle with chronic health issues or simply need support to maintain their independence."

Changes to federal food assistance, health coverage programs like Medicaid and supply chain tariffs are likely to affect

the cost of living, Waidelich adds. "They don't have a safety net."

The people Cummings sees, many of them new to the food pantry, are worried. "They are feeling the weight of things. They are worried about what happens when the tariffs show up," she says. "One of our older volunteers says that coming to the food pantry makes the scariness of the world go away. We want to be that safe place. We want people to feel welcomed." —**Joan Tupponce**

### NO FARMS, NO FOOD

Farms across the country have relied on immigrant labor, but that dependable workforce is threatened due to the Trump administration's increased detentions and deportations.

Federal cuts and policy changes have made it harder for workers with H-2A (agricultural) visas to arrive to farms on time. "The fruit that they're coming to work with doesn't wait," says Agriberry Farm General Manager Pierson Geyer, "and ... it makes it so that [our] future harvest gets much more difficult, too."

Amy's Garden owner Amy Hicks told Richmond magazine in 2023 that, in addition to her family, a trio of these H-2A workers "runs the farm."

The proposed federal budget also includes a 3.5% excise tax (down from its original 5%) on electronic transfers of funds to foreign recipients, impacting workers' families who rely on that income. —**Mark Newton**





## LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY: CARE DENIED

Haiden Hopper is facing a double whammy of life choices that would have been easier to navigate before January, when President Donald Trump signed several executive orders targeting the LGBTQ+ community.

One EO prevents transgender and non-binary people from obtaining or renewing passports that reflect their gender identity. “So now I have a license that says one thing, and my passport says something

totally different,” explains Hopper, who uses the pronouns they and them. “I’m actually getting married next year, and I want to have a honeymoon, but I don’t feel safe to leave the country.”

In addition, Hopper plans to have top surgery this summer but has only found one area doctor who takes their insurance — sort of. “Because my insurance is so particular, they won’t do a [pre-authorization],

so I’m having to [pay] out of pocket,” Hopper says. “Most top surgeries around here run \$7,000 to \$10,000, at least.”

Despite their personal concerns, Hopper, 33, is more worried about trans teens, many of whom are currently being denied gender-related medical care due to a Jan. 28 EO that bans the use of puberty blockers, hormones and gender-affirming care for people under age 19 and prevents certain providers from offering such care. “[They have] to live with all this distress and with these secondary sex characteristics,” they say. “And then you have to go through this big and expensive thing as an adult after all these years of hating your body. It’s really hard to think about.”

Medical organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association say gender-affirming care is medically necessary for treating gender dysphoria. Such care is legal in Virginia. However, Virginia Commonwealth University’s VCU Health and Children’s Hospital of Richmond, along with University of Virginia hospitals, complied with the ban when the EO was first announced before pivoting in February to allow care for current patients who are 19 and older.

“Executive orders are not law, but our hospital systems have cowered to the pressure of the federal administration and have temporarily stopped, or stopped and started, [providing care],” says Shannon McKay, executive director and co-founder of He She Ze and We, a support, education and advocacy nonprofit for transgender and nonbinary people and their families. A VCU spokesperson declined to comment and referred to an online policy post.

“The messaging from our federal government, and even our state government, is emboldening people to openly feel that they can harass people and question and scrutinize,” McKay says. “Just like it wasn’t about water fountains with the Civil Rights Movement, this is not about bathrooms, either. Or women’s sports. This is discrimination, trying to make people give up and not show up.” —**Ian Stewart**

### SERVICE SPACE AXED

The Department of Government Efficiency says it has terminated three federal building leases in Henrico County.

DOGE claims that ending the \$342,341 annual lease for the Virginia and West Virginia Water Science Center, at 1730 E. Parham Road in Glen Allen, would result in \$962,305 in savings. Center Director Mark Bennett says the lease will be terminated this December and that a new space has yet to be secured. The center would also have to clear out a warehouse and a laboratory.

Two other leases near Richmond International Airport are on the chopping block: offices for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s resident agent and Animal and Plant Inspection Services.

The U.S. General Services Administration, which in March launched its Space Match program to help agencies find office space, did not respond to requests for comment. —**MN**



## BUSINESS: 'A LAND OF CONFUSION'

President Donald Trump has implemented tariffs as high as 50% on countries that run a trade deficit with the U.S., as well as a baseline 10% tariff on all other countries. The start dates for the most punishing taxes have largely been delayed, and on May 28, a federal court blocked the tariffs, saying Trump couldn't legally make use of certain emergency powers. The next day, an appeals court allowed them to move forward as the Trump administration challenges the decision.

The back-and-forth makes it tough for businesses to predict what will happen next week, let alone next month.

"We're in a land of confusion," says Scott's Addition custom clothier Kevin Fox. His business, The Suited Fox — "where I do everything from the top to the shoes," he says — has seen a 20% increase in prices on average since tariffs were first announced. "My cost of goods has increased, and it doesn't matter where my shipments are coming from, whether it's Italy, Spain, China, it doesn't matter; they're more expensive now."

The tariffs also hit after customers were quoted for custom suits, which are made overseas, so Fox had to eat those costs. His manufacturing connections, however, have helped him weather the storm. "They've been gracious enough to kind of meet me halfway on a lot of the tariff increases," he says. Fox now is more focused on weddings and other big moments. "You don't see as many people just splurge as we did before," he adds.

Even international corporations are feeling the burn. Alfa Laval, a Swedish maker of heat transfer, separation and fluid handling tech, has operated near Richmond International Airport since 1990. The products made there, created with materials from factories in Europe, India and China, are used across America for food preparation, pharmaceuticals, water treatment, data centers and other uses.

For Alfa Laval, the tariffs have slowed imports at the border, particularly steel,

and confused the company and its customers, says President Ester Codina.

"The lack of clarity makes it very difficult for us to do the right planning, and it's very distracting from what we should be doing — that is, actually focusing on helping our customers here locally and making sure that we have the right strategies to grow the business and employ

more people in the U.S.," Codina says.

What businesses can do, says VCU professor Brett Massimino, is hedge their bets. "A lot of companies — and this could even apply to individual consumers — they're buying things and importing things now in anticipation that this is as good as it's going to get for a long time."

—Mark Newton



Kevin Fox, owner of  
custom suit retailer  
The Suited Fox in  
Scott's Addition

## PUBLIC SUPPORT SLASHED

U.S. Small Business Administration programs face \$287 million in cuts under the proposed federal budget.

The plan is creating a "life-or-death situation" for the Women's Business Center of Central Virginia, says Executive Director Nicole Parker: The \$150,000 that the WBC's only Virginia branch annually receives — which it must match with private funds before it can access the money — is completely cut in the current budget plan.

The cuts would hit other SBA-funded groups differently. While the national SCORE organization would lose \$17 million, SCORE Richmond is self-funded and led by volunteers. The Small Business Development Centers program (represented locally by the Capital Region SBDC), however, would get \$10 million more.

The silver lining is that there is still lots of support for local small businesses, from entities such as the JWC Foundation, Lighthouse Network (formerly Lighthouse Labs), the Metropolitan Business League and the 1717 Collective. —MN



## ARTS & CULTURE: IN LIMBO

Considering the financial stresses of recent years, the region's arts and culture organizations have demonstrated resilience, surviving through a mix of supportive audiences, philanthropy, and federal and local assistance. Even in the best of times, groups large and small use these means to maintain themselves.

On May 2, arts and cultural organizations here and across the country received emails tersely explaining that federal grants were "being allocated in furtherance of the Administration's agenda" and that certain projects did not align with present priorities. Agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services canceled many of their promised allocations.

Emily Smith directs the artist-run 1708 Gallery, which initiated the InLight exhibition 17 years ago with NEA support. "The NEA has funded InLight for over a

decade; last year we received [\$50,000]," Smith says. "We applied to the second cycle, which historically sends notifications in April, and we've heard nothing."

Several local groups are in limbo regarding their programming.

The NEA cut its own ArtsHERE initiative, with funds delivered in cooperation with South Arts and through partnership with regional arts organizations. For Richmond-based Oakwood Arts, this meant a hands-on project to help students learn filmmaking went dark.

"It just feels petty," Ashley Hawkins of Manchester's Studio Two Three says.

Hawkins' organization experienced the cancellation of two grants totaling \$230,000: Studio Two Three sought to install solar panels on its old school building and upgrade its HVAC system. The now-vanished grants made up 36% of the organization's budget.

Development Director Kate Fowler observes, "If organizations have already

started operating for their fiscal year with [grants] in mind, [the government] reached into small organizations' wallets and stole that money. I think, too, it's intentional, to make grassroots organizations fail."

Studio Two Three combines the entrepreneurial with the artistic. The nonprofit, non-stock company produces screen-printed T-shirts, totes and other materials and offers classes, workshops and meeting space for smaller groups. Some services may be cut back, but the organization, which owns its building, isn't going anywhere.

Hawkins and Fowler are gratified that public donations have ticked up with the news. Other arts and culture groups are bracing for the worst. "We're lucky we've always been an earned-income organization," Fowler says. "Grant funding has been an addition and makes us stronger. Some organizations, though, are at risk of shutting their doors."

Hawkins adds, "It's going to be a weird four years." —**Harry Kollatz Jr.**



[From left] Kate Fowler and Ashley Hawkins of Studio Two Three arts center in Manchester

## STATIONARY STATUES

Richmond's deposed Confederate monuments will likely stay in storage despite President Donald Trump's March executive order that, among other things, seeks the restoration of statues and other properties "improperly removed or changed in the last five years." Richmond's monuments, however, don't belong to the federal government.

After the city's civil rights protests in 2020, ownership of Richmond's statues was transferred from the commonwealth to the city and then to the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia and The Valentine (neither responded to requests for comment by press time). Most are now stored near the city's wastewater treatment plant. —**MN**

JAY PAUL



## RESEARCH GRANTS: RESTRICTIONS PENDING, COMPLIANCE PLANNED

In addition to seeking cures, many medical researchers in Richmond are looking for ways to comply with changes in policies governing federal funding for their work. Restrictions announced in February by the Trump administration threatened to freeze funds and cap spending, but the changes have mostly been delayed or blocked. Additional grants totaling nearly \$1.4 billion were cut in April and are now the subject of a multistate federal lawsuit.

The Trump administration wants to cap reimbursements on indirect costs for doing research at 15%, but the National Science Foundation in mid-May delayed implementation until mid-June. Researchers contend that limiting funding for support staff, maintenance, facilities and equipment could halt research.

"While the last several months have been filled with uncertainty and concern, it is important to share that we do not let it stop us from conducting the groundbreaking research that has made VCU a national research powerhouse," says P. Srirama Rao, vice president for research and innovation for VCU. "The Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation and research administrators across the university have been working as hard as possible to ensure that our researchers have every level of support we can provide."

VCU is keeping abreast of the changes and sharing information with its staff and students through a website. It has also compiled a database on federal executive orders, memos and guidance that impact the university regarding research, international students and other issues. The site offers guidance for issues such as a May 14 Department of Defense announcement that also called for a 15% limit on indirect research costs incurred under new grants as well as renegotiating already-approved



grants within six months.

Medical research generated \$115.4 million in federal grant funding for clinical trials in Richmond in 2024. VCU received \$111.9 million in grants, according to a National Institutes of Health database.

A 15% flat rate cap on indirect costs is already a reality for many smaller research operations. "It is not something I would ever want us to undertake because it is cost prohibitive to actually go about getting [a prenegotiated rate the way larger organizations do] and it doesn't align with the kind of research that we want to do,"

says Debbi Gilad, vice president of clinical research for Bon Secours Mercy Health.

Bon Secours researchers in Richmond and its other nine markets generally rely more on industry-sponsored funding than federal money for their work. Bon Secours researchers are generally not the prime recipients of federal funding but may receive money via working grants awarded through a large academic medical center that is part of the research project. "It's a downstream effect for us that we likely won't feel," Gilad says.

—Tharon Giddens ■

### REAFFIRMED PURPOSE FOR HBCUS

In April, President Donald Trump recognized historically black colleges and universities in an executive order, pledging federal support — such as holding an annual summit — but not more funding. The order was filed as Trump also targets Ivy League schools over their diversity, equity and inclusion policies.

Virginia Union University President Hakim Lucas praised the order in a statement: "The White House's renewed commitment to HBCUs through this executive order affirms what we at [VUU] — and across the HBCU community — have always known: Our institutions are engines of excellence, innovation and transformation. This directive not only acknowledges our historic contributions but reinforces the urgent need to invest in our future." —MN





KEYA'S  
SNACKS

# Snack ATTACK!

RICHMOND IS A HOT SPOT FOR  
SUCCESSFUL FOOD BRANDS

by Genevieve Steele  
and Eileen Mellon

SABRA

NIGHTINGALE

JUSTIN CHESNEY





Scenes from the groundbreaking ceremony at Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches' new production facility; founders Hannah Pollack and Xavier Meers are pictured at right.



## WE'RE A SNACK FOOD NATION: RESEARCH SHOWS MOST AMERICANS MUNCH BETWEEN MEALS MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY.

According to Statista, the U.S. market eclipsed \$50 billion in snack sales last year, making it a tantalizing global territory for cookies, chips and ice cream — our nation's top three sellers. That's a tempting number for both budding entrepreneurs and established brands to sink their teeth into.

Once known for producing cigarettes, Richmond has shifted from rolling hunger-dulling smokes to satisfying consumers' salty and sweet cravings. The snack food industry is a key driver of the area's manufacturing sector, according to the Greater Richmond Partnership,

a regional economic development organization for the city of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico.

Big brands such as Mondelez International (Oreos, Wheat Thins) and noodle soup producer Maruchan have facilities here, and River City labels including Ukrop's Homestyle Foods (an evolution of the beloved family-owned grocery chain) have fattened their outputs from fun sized to factory sized.

How does Richmond attract global firms such as Sabra Dipping Company and what makes the region a hotbed of successful hometown labels, from Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches to the up-and-coming Keya's Snacks?

### CRAFTING A SENSATION

"We all have this childhood memory of ice cream dripping down our fingers in the summer," says Hannah Pollack, co-owner of Richmond-based Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches with her husband, Xavier Meers. "I wanted that nostalgia, but I wanted it to be handcrafted."

Pollack conceived her ideal ice cream sandwich while serving as a chef at the bygone Greenleaf's Pool Room in 2015, and the treat has become the couple's golden ticket. Meers, a chef originally from Belgium and, initially, the primary salesperson for the brand, knew they had a hit after Pollack created the dessert one night at work. Even though Meers may not have fully anticipated the company's





later success, Pollack says, laughing, “He thought it was something special to sell 10 or 12 [ice cream sandwiches] at a time to restaurateur friends.”

After Meers encouraged Pollack to devote her energy to scaling up production, the brand took off. Nightingale sales have doubled year over year since 2016. In 2019, they moved into commissary space Hatch Kitchen, which they outgrew twice before moving into their own building at Clopton Siteworks in Manchester. The company now employs about 80 people who make over 2 million ice cream sandwiches a month; Pollack expects to exceed \$25 million in revenue this year. In May, the duo secured and started renovations on a 28,000-square-foot production facility and corporate headquarters in Richmond — a \$5.8 million move. The new site will house a production kitchen, walk-in freezers and four loading bays and should be ready next year.

Along the way, Nightingale has grown from selling to local markets, breweries and restaurants to specialty stores further afield and then national retailers including Harris Teeter, Kroger and Whole Foods. The company currently supplies more than 5,000 retailers. They’ve landed venue partnerships with Hard Rock Stadium in Miami and the international arm of JetBlue airline, where Nightingale Chomps, half-sized bars developed in 2022, are among the snack offerings. The miniature sandwiches are also stocked at all East Coast Costco locations. In

2024, Cookie Monster flavor sandwiches (a chocolate chip cookie sandwich with cookie crumb-infused vanilla ice cream) sold out at Costco warehouse chains in only a week, and this summer, a strawberry shortcake 18-pack exclusive to the store is setting sales records.

Nightingale’s seven core flavors — The Classic, Cookie Monster, Strawberry Shortcake, Chocolate Blackout, Key Lime Pie, Chocolate French Roast, and Pollack’s personal favorite, Banana Pudding — consist of 14% butterfat ice cream and gourmet mix-ins, sandwiched between two hand-pressed cookie bars. “No matter how much we scale up [production],” Pollack

says, “we want to make a quality product. The taste, texture and eating experience must remain perfect.”

Taste is Quality Control Manager Emily Acevedo’s realm — Pollack calls her the company’s “flavor queen.” Acevedo oversees ingredient sourcing for Nightingale’s creations, many inspired by Southern and French cuisine.

Keeping the treats consistent and meeting both internal standards and those of their partners — like the “clean label, clean ingredient” benchmark of Whole Foods — are key, and there can be hurdles. “It takes about six months to develop a new flavor,” Acevedo says. “We play with flavors. This spring we intro-



Workers at Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches boxing up treats



## NIGHTINGALE

### BY THE NUMBERS

**70,000+**

ice cream sandwiches are produced every day.

**2 MILLION**

sandwiches are made every month.

**130,000 LBS**

of fresh bananas go into the top-selling Banana Pudding flavor every year.

**4,000 LBS**

of vanilla wafers go into the Banana Pudding flavor every year.



duced raspberry croissant and lemon meringue pie [ice cream sandwiches]. We use fresh fruit, no [genetically modified organisms], no dyes. Sourcing non-GMO marshmallows for our lemon meringue pie bars was challenging, but we finally found a small, woman-owned marshmallow company that made marshmallows without GMO corn syrup. I see future partnerships with this maker.”

### COURTING COMMERCE

Satisfying Whole Foods’ specs wasn’t the only hurdle Nightingale had to jump. Accessing funds to buy and convert a former printing factory into a food factory was also a leap, one that required deep pockets with a silver lining in the form of assistance from the local government. The city of Richmond, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Greater Richmond Partnership all helped Nightingale rise, and a grant from the Virginia Jobs Investment Program — a taxpayer-funded program that proffers dollars and business consultation to companies hiring new workers within the state — enabled the company to generate 166 new jobs.

VEDP Director of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Shaun Malik is a Virginia native who grew up in a restaurant family. He and Jennifer Wakefield, GRP’s president and CEO, are part of a two-pronged effort led by city and state government aimed at giving scrappy startups like Nightingale the legs to run in the region’s munchies marathon and luring larger manufacturers to Richmond.



R&D-licious: A peek inside the research and development facilities at (from left) Nightingale and Sabra



“

**A top priority for me at the VEDP is to help small businesses not only start in Virginia but thrive in Virginia.”**

—Shaun Malik, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Wakefield is also the GRP’s site location consultant — one of about 200 across the United States — who attends business conferences hoping to convince companies to set up operations here. Chesterfield and Henrico counties have their own consultants, which are public-private entities, but Richmond is the lead economic development corporation. “We go and meet the companies together, traveling around the world to attend trade shows,” Wakefield says.

The financial factors that woo estab-

lished companies such as Sabra Dipping Company to the region include commercial real estate costs that are 27% below the national average, commercial electricity rates 8% below the national average and a corporate tax rate of 6% (unchanged since the 1970s). Those stats would be appealing to any business, but what really sets Richmond apart for food commerce are its central location and speedy access to major markets from the East Coast via interstates 95 and 64, Richmond International Airport, and, for bulky supplies or products ferried internationally, the Port of Virginia.

Sabra, known for its many flavors of hummus, began in Queens, New York, in 1986 and moved its headquarters and manufacturing facilities to Chesterfield County in 2008. Site consultants from Chesterfield and the Greater Richmond Partnership were instrumental in enticing the company to open its 10,000-square-foot plant in the Ruffin Mill Industrial Park. Importantly, the factory was built in the Walthall Enterprise Zone, which can waive permitting fees and offer utility discounts, tax rebates and Virginia Jobs Investment Program grants.

In 2012, Sabra expanded with a research and development facility, made possible by a \$250,000 grant from the Governor’s Opportunity Fund and VJIP, creating 90 additional jobs at the company. The Virginia plant employs 425 people.

JAY PAUL





“

It took me two years to scale the blend for large production — about 2,000 pounds [of spices]. The flavors are volatile because they come from whole ingredients without preservatives to maintain flavors. That standard is non-negotiable for me.”

—Keya Wingfield, Keya's Snacks



## HOMEGROWN SUCCESS

Attracting industry whales with incentives including factory buildouts is the goal of the Greater Richmond Partnership and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, but smaller local brands need attention and assistance, too. “A top priority for me at the VEDP is to help small businesses not only start in Virginia but thrive in Virginia,” Malik says.

The up-and-coming Keya's Snacks is a prime example. The company makes two flavors of clean-label (meaning no preservatives or dyes) potato chips topped with organic, crafted-to-order spice blends from India.

Founder Keya Wingfield, a former culinary instructor and the 2021 winner of Food Network's “Spring Baking Championship,” has long incorporated flavors from her native India into her cuisine. Her brand's Bombay Spice and Black Salt potato chips, bagged in what Wingfield calls “disruptive packaging,” offer a rush of aroma and tongue-tingling piquancy via dozens of freshly toasted seasonings.

“The product came to life organically,” Wingfield says. “My husband is white and didn't like Indian food. I used to make my Bombay spice blend out of homesickness. I put it on eggs, tacos. One day, I put it on my husband's potato chips. It opened his palate.” And when she tucked packets of the chips into takeout meals she sold independently during the COVID-19 pandemic, they caused a sensation — and inspired the new company.

There's a reason the chips struck a chord: The bags of crunchy, fried convenience are at the core of cultural snacking. According to FoodBev Media, Americans eat more potato chips than any other country. These spicy, salty, locally created chips tap into the global food trends beloved by millennials while hitting on other qualities younger consumers are willing to pay for: organic, single-origin ingredients sourced directly for Wingfield.

“I'm using, literally, whole organic garlic bulbs with the roots still on them, dried fresh mangoes and organic turmeric, among other spices that are grown and

ground for me in India,” Wingfield says. “It took me two years to scale the blend for large production — about 2,000 pounds [of spices]. The flavors are volatile because they come from whole ingredients without preservatives to maintain flavors. That standard is nonnegotiable for me.”

Originally crafted and casually introduced in 2020, the potato chips were relaunched this spring. While the recipe didn't change, the graphics and branding are now more vibrant. The brightly colored bags — featuring an Indian woman with a bindi, the vermilion dot symbolizing wisdom, adorning the center of her forehead — have gone viral on TikTok; landed at Pop-up Grocer, a New York City-based hub for the consumer packaged goods; and sold out at The Goods Mart, a New York convenience store boasting 100-plus women-owned food brands.

## SUPERSIZE ME

Living in Richmond, however, Wingfield lacks access to a local, economically viable co-packer, so Keya's Snacks are currently produced and bagged in Pennsylvania. “I would love to be a Virginia-produced company,” Wingfield says.

It's a common problem, one Malik is working to solve for the Richmond region. He says smaller companies usually start off in commercial kitchens and then move to co-op spaces or food accelerators. “The gap we find is that after \$2 million in revenue, the companies need to expand,” he explains. “It becomes a chicken-or-egg situation. They're typically not able to afford their own space without significant outside investment.”

A commercial co-manufacturer can help grow an expanding snack company without the maker taking the multimillion-dollar leap of buying its own factory — as Nightingale did — or selling off a substantial chunk of its brand to investors. “There's a shortage of co-manufacturers,” Malik says. “The demand and contracts from the Krogers, the Walmarts, they're there, but the smaller companies just don't have the space, funding or





Olugbenga Diyaolu, global chief research, development and sustainability officer at Sabra Dipping Company

resources to accelerate production. Our hope in developing co-manufacturing in Virginia is to bring people back and to grow what's already here."

But homegrown production solutions are just one slice of the return on investment Malik seeks from fostering competitive food and beverage manufacturing spaces in the region. The larger ROI comes from coinvesting in already established but growing food and beverage manufacturers from other parts of the country, such as the West Coast, that seek greater consumer access via interstate roadways and Europe through the Port of Virginia — access the Port of Los Angeles doesn't offer.

"We hope, with our new approach to economic development," Malik says, "that we can attract midsize [food and beverage] manufacturers [to expand in Virginia], those with one or two plants nationwide. This represents the greatest amount of job creation for the state."

It's a goal that could also make a difference to emerging companies, including Keya's Snacks. Though Wingfield's chips are selling out on end caps at specialty markets, she doesn't have the numbers to

build her own production line. Eclipsing \$25 million in revenue opened financial doors for Nightingale. But Malik thinks he may hold the key to driving diverse businesses to the Tri-Cities of Virginia: converting former office buildings, or dormant city-owned properties, into co-packing plants.

"What better story is there," Malik asks, "than going from \$5 million in sales and 20 employees, to \$100 million in sales a year?" That's what access to financially feasible co-packing brings to the table.

At the Nightingale factory announcement this spring, Jose Romano, executive vice president of business development at the Greater Richmond Partnership, said of the treats, "They are a bold dream supported by resources that make them real."

During that same debut, Pollack and Meers, the couple behind the cool confections, spoke about their success. The opportunity to own their own factory, reinvest in the local economy and share a product they are proud of has been a fulfilling and extraordinary experience. And it all started with an ice cream sandwich. **R**

## Surprising FOOD PRODUCTS made in Richmond

### BY THE NUMBERS



#### OREO COOKIES

About **10,000 OREOS** a minute are baked in greater Richmond, making the region a key production hub for the iconic treat.

#### RAMEN NOODLES

The Chesterfield County plant is Maruchan's East Coast production facility, helping to produce **3.6 BILLION** packages of ramen noodle soup each year.



#### SPRINKLES

Mavalero, the largest maker of decorative confectionery products including colorful sprinkles, opened a **\$5 MILLION** manufacturing facility in Hanover County in 2015.

#### SALUME

Founded in 1850, Fiorucci Foods is a **TOP 10** producer of Italian salume and has a facility in South Chesterfield.



#### SOY SAUCE

San-J International, the nearly 225-year-old soy sauce company from Japan, built its first American production and brewing facility in Richmond in 2019, making nearly **200,000 BOTTLES** a day.



#### HUMMUS

The nation's top-selling hummus is made in Chesterfield County. Sabra Dipping Company produces

**10,000 TONS** of hummus every month.





SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

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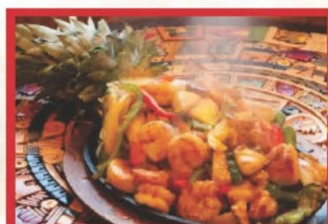
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# EAT & DRINK



Orange Crush from  
The Lilly Pad

JUSTIN CHESNEY

Origins of the  
Orange Crush  
P. 120

Lakeside's pint-sized  
gelato shop  
P. 124

Talking fresh catches  
at Tuckahoe Seafood  
P. 128

Clams are a  
summer staple  
P. 130

The pickle queen  
of Richmond  
P. 132

Edited by EILEEN MELLON





Little Nickel's Orange Crush includes Chinola, a passion fruit liqueur.

IN DEPTH

## FRESHLY CRUSHED

A cocktail's lore from seaside sip to summer must *By Bird Cox*

**S**ometimes a drink debuts on the bar scene that is unexpected. With a single sip, imbibers immediately realize it'll become a standing order, and in this case, a summer rite of passage. This is the story of the Orange Crush, a simple yet quintessential warm-weather cocktail that is believed to have been created in the mid-90s at Harborside Bar & Grill in Ocean City, Maryland.

Once Harborside started pressing fresh oranges and using the juice as a mixer, the super-sippable star was born. Not to be confused with a Screwdriver, the original recipe featured fresh OJ, vodka, triple sec and lemon-lime soda.

Almost immediately, the easy and approachable drink was mimicked at bars and restaurants up and down the East Coast (they say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery). Delaware even tried to claim it as their state cocktail — despite its Maryland origins — after the beach town bars there had so much success serving them. In June, the Orange Crush was designated the state cocktail of Maryland, officially settling the debate.

Bright, juicy and icy, the refreshing drink traditionally relies on orange juice freshly squeezed out of its sunny little sphere; no other beverage tops the sensory pleasure of that citrusy bite. Variations for the other ingredients include triple sec, Cointreau or Grand Marnier; club soda; and crushed, chipped or cubed ice.

In Richmond, there are a few places to get a Crush. Beverage director and tenured bartender Madison Pere at Forest Hills' tropical paradise Little Nickel whips up a frozen and standard Crush. Her version is inspired by her love of the Crush at Dockside Tiki Bar in Colonial Beach. Pere says, "You think, 'How do I make



it mine? How do you take a good idea and give it a twist, make it an ode, rather than just change one little detail and call it yours? You never want to just copy somebody. You have to break it down and think about it."

Pere reaches for Chinola, a passion fruit liqueur that adds a zing of fruity tartness. "I wanted to make my version juicier," Pere says. "It hit that quench, and it wasn't exactly like the ones I've had in other places."

During the summer, Little Nickel's outdoor pool-inspired shack, Snack Bar, comes to life as a lounge and hangout serving small bites like hot dogs and ceviche. It is also home to a frozen drink machine churning out a slushy-style version of an Orange Crush, dubbed a "Crushie."

The Lilly Pad serves Orange Crush and presents the ideal environment in which to drink one: right on the James River with the boats going by. Owner Max Walraven reflects, "I was amazed by the Crush at Waterman's in Virginia Beach—they have the Orange Crush machine, and they're quite well-known for it. When The Lilly Pad first got the Orange Crush around 2016-17, they were hand-squeezing every orange with a crank squeezer."

In 2020, The Lilly Pad was remodeled, and with it came a new influx of customers attracted to the riverside gem. "It was Lilly Pad 2.0, and we were busier than it had ever been, with lines out the door. So, we changed to Natalie's fresh-squeezed juice instead, a high-end fresh juice, in order to keep making them."



Although Orange Crush devotees may shake a finger at reaching for a jug of juice, the high-volume adaptation still delivers a high-flavored sip. The Lilly Pad's crush uses orange liqueur and a local touch, too: Belle Isle Moonshine Blood Orange.

As Pere and Walraven mentioned, if you're heading to Virginia Beach for a mini getaway, Waterman's Surfside Grille is your Orange Crush destination in the 757. The Waterman family businesses include a separate distillery where they now make Perfect Crush, a spirit marrying orange vodka and orange liqueur, which they use at the bar. You can find the stand-alone product at the ABC store if you're interested in making your own. Restaurant manager Gloria Boban notes, "In the summer, we make up to 600 Orange Crushes a week." And that's just the orange ones, which is saying something, since their menu features 15 different crush drinks. **B**

## MAKE IT YOUR OWN



### LIQUEUR

Swap the Triple Sec for Chinola, Grand Marnier or Cointreau



### BASE

For the spirit, opt for locally made Cirrus Vodka, Belle Isle Moonshine Blood Orange or Waterman Spirits' The Perfect Crush



### BUBBLES

Instead of Sprite, top with plain sparkling or soda water, or a fruity or citrusy flavor such as mango-orange or lemon Spindrift



### PLUS OR MINUS

Add orange bitters, orange zest or fresh-squeezed lemon juice, or replace navel oranges with blood oranges





AROUND TOWN

## BEST BITES

Dishes we can't stop dreaming about

### AL PASTOR TACOS

**\$3.99 at Tacos El Ingeniero, 7429 Midlothian Turnpike, North Chesterfield**

The first time I had Tacos El Ingeniero's al pastor tacos, I'd spotted their glistening spit beneath a tent at the Latino Farmers Market. The stacked, seasoned pork—sliced to order and packed into handmade corn tortillas—summoned me. At the market and their brick-and-mortar space, find a bar stocked with fresh radishes, limes, onions, cilantro and salsas. Noteworthy: The restaurant opens at 9 a.m. daily and serves breakfast tacos. —*Eileen Mellon*

Al Pastor  
Tacos from  
Tacos El  
Ingeniero

### SALTED CARAMEL GELATO WITH HALVAH AND GREEK HONEY

**\$10 at Stella's, 1012 Lafayette St.** Earlier this year, our rental company offered us a gift card as an incentive for renewing our lease. After five months of unreturned calls and emails and a few in-person confrontations, they finally delivered on their promise. We spent it in the best possible way: a date night capped with Stella's salted caramel gelato, an exclusive flavor by Gelati Celesti that's Greek-ified with crumbly cocoa halvah (a crushed sesame seed confection) and ambrosial honey. Sweet victory. —*Ryan Rich*

### STEAMED PORK BUNS

**\$3.50 each at Dumpling & Noodle Cart, 3321 W. Cary St.** Finding our Sunday afternoon dampened by rain, my friend and I recently scrambled into this aromatic and affordable dumpling haven. We ordered steamed buns that were perfectly pillowy and warm, enveloping juicy Chinese barbecued pork. The buns went for a flavorful dunk in the complimentary hoisin sauce while we indulged in our favorite sport of people-watching from the inviting window seats. —*Anna Kiepke*



### EVENT PICKS

A pair of seasonal besties are meeting up for a juicy 10-day celebration. **DUKE'S HOT TOMATO SUMMER TOUR** is back July 17-27, with dozens of area restaurants serving unique specials that feature the dynamic duo of 'maters and mayo.

**POSITIVELY DELICIOUS**, a food-focused fundraiser benefiting the nonprofit Positive Vibe Foundation, returns July 26 with a beach party-themed gala. Expect small bites from local chefs during the tasting soiree.

### REMEMBER THAT PLACE?

## Palani Drive



Jeff Weatherly

**WHEN JEFF WEATHERLY** opened Palani Drive in the former Don Warner Music building at 401 Libbie Ave. in 1998, his idea was a coffee shop that also offered smoothies and burritos. "Starbucks wasn't here yet," Weatherly says. The smoothies and wraps took off, and Weatherly knew he had something. Twenty-seven years later, the original inspiration for the long-time eatery remains.

The name "Palani Drive" is a nod to the Ironman World Championship held in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Palani Road is the homestretch, "where you're almost at the finish line," Weatherly says. While traveling along the West Coast and competing in triathlons, Weatherly became inspired by the cafes. "There was nothing like that in Richmond," he says.

Palani's casual offerings include spicy Thai peanut wraps, shrimp po'boy wraps,

breakfast burritos, quesadillas and hearty salads. The smoothies are a signature item at Palani. Freshly made (they even squeeze their own guava juice!) and packed with flavor, longtime favorites include the Ike Mango Monkey (banana, blueberry and mango juice). Dressings, hummus and sauces are made in-house.

Palani has an array of vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. Weatherly says, "The menu allows customers to create their own meals and accommodate dietary preferences."

After all these years, one principle keeps Weatherly and Palani Drive going: "Do what you know, and do it well." —*Matthew Sporn*

*Hot and new can steal the spotlight, but what about longstanding local favorites? Each month, we'll visit a Richmond-area restaurant that has been in business 15 years or longer.*



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## SPOTLIGHT

## LAYNE MONTGOMERY

Get to know the flavor artist and owner of Lakeside's Davvero Gelato

By Eileen Mellon



## GELATO TOURISM

"I grew up in Richmond, and I went to VCU. I fell in love with gelato the summer after graduation. I rented a little apartment in Perugia, Italy, with my best friend for three months, and we basically spent the whole time hunting down the best gelaterias in all the towns we visited."



## FLAVOR FOUNDATION

"Our vanilla is a menu staple that took me years to come up with. We make a cashew cream for the base and use a mix of vanillas to give it depth and interest. We're known for our nut flavors; pistachio is a crowd favorite, and I love hazelnut and peanut butter."



## CULINARY IMPRINT

"I spent my mid-20s to early 30s in Istanbul, and I consider Turkey my second home. The food is unbelievably good, especially desserts. My love of nuts, specifically pistachios, deepened during my seven-year residence. Also, Italy for the obvious reason: gelato."



## UNDERRATED TREAT

"The gelato panino. The contrast in temperature and savory-sweet [flavors] is very satisfying. In Italy, an ice cream sandwich is literally gelato in a brioche bun. I'm also a big fan of our espresso con panna – double shot of espresso topped with whipped cream."



## DINING HAUNTS

"My go-to spots are Nineveh and Mediterranean Bakery for Middle Eastern food, El Chido in the gas station parking lot [at 6715 Staples Mill Road] for Mexican food, Aha Indian for dosa and Jannat Indian, and Vietnam 1 and Pho Tay Do. Also, Europa Food Market for the best bagel sandwiches."



## NEIGHBORHOOD LOVE

"Lakeside is very supportive and loyal to local businesses. Customers always comment on how charming Lakeside is with its nostalgic vibes. I like that the shop is a little tucked away; it makes it feel like a special discovery."



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RECIPE

# FRIED GREEN TOMATO CHAAT

Lehja's James Beard Award-nominated chef and owner Sunny Baweja shares a signature dish with a summer twist



## SUNNY DAYS

Punjab, India, native Sunny Baweja is a chaat master. The flavorful street food snack is a must at his restaurant, Lehja, which recently reached a 15-year milestone. When Baweja opened the business, he settled on a suburban location – Short Pump Town Center – and leaned into presenting a refined selection of Indian cuisine, inviting customers to have an experiential dinner rather than a takeout meal. “We were not targeting just one region of India,” Baweja says. “That was unusual, and that was risky. But it has paid off.” To commemorate its anniversary, Lehja is introducing new dishes, such as a lamb loin chop with khichdi (a rice and lentil dish) and seasonal okra chaat.

### INGREDIENTS

3–4 green Hanover tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch slices  
Kosher salt and black pepper  
1 1/2 cups chickpea flour (add a squeeze of fresh lime juice)  
1/4 cup rice flour  
1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste  
1 teaspoon ground roasted cumin  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1/2 teaspoon Kashmiri red chili powder or cayenne pepper  
1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
Scant 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 cup water  
2 cups panko breadcrumbs  
Oil for frying (avocado oil or oil of your choice)

#### For serving

Plain Greek yogurt (lightly season with honey, chili powder and cumin powder)  
Tamarind chutney  
Cilantro-mint chutney (recipe below)  
Chaat masala seasoning  
Kashmiri red chili powder or cayenne pepper  
Fresh pomegranate arils  
Fresh cilantro

### CILANTRO-MINT CHUTNEY

1 bunch cilantro  
1/2 bunch mint leaves  
1 tablespoon lime juice

1 green chile or jalapeno  
2 ounces fresh ginger, peeled and chopped  
1 tablespoon avocado or extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon honey

Blend all ingredients together in a food processor.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Dice 3–4 slices of tomato for garnish and set aside. Season the remaining slices with salt and pepper to taste. Combine chickpea and rice flours, ginger-garlic paste, and spices (cumin through black pepper) in a shallow bowl. Slowly add up to 1 cup of water and mix to create a thick batter. Dredge tomato slices in the batter, then press both sides into breadcrumbs to coat. Lay battered tomato slices on a baking sheet; set aside for 1–2 minutes. Heat oil to 350 degrees in a large saucepan. Gently place tomato slices into the oil and cook until golden brown and floating, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain on a plate lined with paper towels. To serve, top with sweetened yogurt, tamarind chutney and cilantro-mint chutney. Dust with chaat masala and Kashmiri chili powder, then garnish with reserved chopped tomatoes, pomegranate arils and cilantro sprigs. Serves 3–4.



On Aug. 25, Lehja will host the culminating event for Summer Supper Somm, an annual dinner series showcasing heirloom tomatoes from Hanover's Village Garden and celebrating Virginia wines. The series kicks off June 30 with stops at more than 20 restaurants across the commonwealth, plus events in South Carolina and Georgia. —Eileen Mellon





# OPPORTUNITIES

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Q&amp;A

# SMOOTH SAILING

Tuckahoe Seafood owner Drew Lucas steers the ship at the West End shop

By Eileen Mellon

Tucked away in a tiny shopping strip off Patterson Avenue is family-owned Tuckahoe Seafood. The local market has been around since the 1970s, supplying customers with fresh fish and classic cold-case staples like their signature shrimp salad. Richmond native Drew Lucas previously worked for the business as general manager before becoming its owner along with his wife, Stephanie.

**Richmond magazine:** How did you get into this line of work?

**Drew Lucas:** I did restaurant [jobs] for a while. I always knew I loved cooking, and I loved working with food, and I loved working with people and the interactions at the counter and talking with customers. I applied here [at Tuckahoe Seafood] and got a job. I worked for the owner for about four years and looked at buying it from him when he was ready to sell, but it didn't make sense at the time. I carried on helping with the new guy, and then I got laid off and bounced around a few more places. When I heard that he had closed, I bought the rights to the business. We came here and did this, and that was seven years ago in May.



Chesapeake Bay soft-shell crabs



Drew Lucas with Alaskan sockeye salmon and Georgia shrimp

To have a chance to have a vision for this place and to bring it back from literal closure, and not necessarily keep it reminiscent of its youth, but just to revitalize it, is special. I feel like we've been pretty successful.

“  
We want to know where every single thing comes from and if it's wild-caught, if it's farm-raised.”

—Drew Lucas, Tuckahoe Seafood

**RM:** How is it operating as a niche food shop in the region?

**Lucas:** It's pretty awesome. I can tell you as somebody who has worked in a major grocery store, where the seafood is a complete afterthought, here we are able to take such care with everything we do because it's all we do, and that's why people come to places like us. It's nice to have the trust of clients and customers, and we know them by name, and we talk with them about how they cook their food. It's just a community; I love it.

I feel like we have a pretty good commitment to our employees, too. Todd Hunt has been with us for seven years now, and he started two weeks after we opened. We have a young man who just finished his junior year at Virginia Tech, and he's been helping us seasonally since he was a junior in high school. Little things like that. Our crew is important and as cliché as it is, we're like family.

**RM:** What are the pillars of Tuckahoe Seafood and its underlying mission?

**Lucas:** One of the biggest things is a focus on stewardship, sustainability, the oceans, the animals. We want to know where every single thing comes from and if it's wild-caught, if it's farm-raised. There are a lot of things that don't meet our criteria. We'll send fish back; if I wouldn't want to eat it, I'm not going to sell it. So, responsible and sustainable aquaculture, no chemicals, [no] antibiotics. We also donate all of our oyster shells to VCU Rice Rivers Center. Another part of it is the inclusion of a ton of local products. Supporting the local economy is really important.

**RM:** How did you get connected to seafood and this field in general?

**Lucas:** My grandparents had a cottage down in Rivanna that we go to incredibly frequently. I grew up on the water, fishing a lot and hanging out. My grandmother on my mom's side was an incredible old country lady, wonderful at cooking. My mom loved cooking, and then Stephanie taught me a lot about cooking, too.

**RM:** In terms of summer, what fish can people expect to come in?

**Lucas:** Crabs are the biggest thing, and we're hoping this crab season will be awesome. Last year was the best one we've seen in a while. By mid-summer and through fall is the best. Tuna, flounder, North Carolina shrimp—that's more local or regional stuff. **RM**

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

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Alewife's fried clam strips with Sichuan dry rub, scallion, cilantro and dried chiles

5 FAVES

# UNHINGED

Clams come out of their shells in an array of dishes

By Genevelyn Steele

## 1 Olde Salte Clams

\$2.75 at Rappahannock

Imperial seafood towers are one option for whiling away a hot summer afternoon, especially when they're brimming with bivalves. A simpler pleasure: piloting your fork to separate Olde Salt clams from their shells. Slurping the briny, clean juices, then savoring the flesh dipped in tangy mignonette calls up its Chincoteague origins of sand, sun and salt.

## 2 Clams With Minced Pork

\$24.95 at Full Kee

This off-menu special is featured regularly in the late spring and early fall months, when quahog clams are easily harvested, but a cooler spring has resulted in a summer of plenty. Served in the shell, the quarter-sized lumps of sea meat drip with bird's eye chiles, chunky onion and a rich brown sauce laden with crisp strips of stir-fried pork.

## 3 Clam Pasta

\$25 at Edo's Squid

Choices! Should you order a pungent, soupy bowl of pasta and littleneck clams served in the Italian stalwart's healing garlic and white wine broth? Or opt for clams in red sauce, with marinara imposing a fruity sweetness and just a whisper of heat? Both are served with long noodles to twirl tender baby clams into a nest of comforting, al dente spaghetti.

## 4 Navajas al Natural

\$20 at Adarra

Tinned razor clams remove the fickleness of an inconstant supply chain and guarantee a level of quality chef-owner Randall Doetzer is comfortable with serving. The recipe for this dish is simple. He says, "We buy very good razor clams, smoke very good butter and throw a bunch of leeks in the fire." Order plenty of toast to sop up Neptune's gravy.

## 5 Fried Clam Strips

\$15 at Alewife

This Church Hill seafood den puts an Asian-inspired twist on an easy summer shack classic. Hunks of clams are stripped, breaded and fried before being tossed in a Sichuan dry rub made of fresh scallion, cilantro and fragrant dried chiles. The dish is a popular standby in the restaurant's Siren Song, a smorgasbord of the sea that features an assortment of bites.

### OPEN TAB

## Sangria Bonita

A fruity and fun, but often misconceived sipper



Spiced Sangria at Botanya

Much like ice cream and peanut butter, wine is a fine, fine thing to which the addition of 'chunks' is either glorious or blasphemous. For those in the former group, the sweet-sour hits of chilled, booze-soaked fruit in sangria are luscious and celebratory—it's a tiny party in a glass, bursting with color, flavor and texture. Sangria made in the Spanish tradition uses Rioja, spices, fresh fruit, and sugar or honey, but there are endless modern variations that appeal to every palate, including white wine sangrias and those with added liqueurs and sparkling floats. Here are a few takes on summer sangrias from Richmond wine pros:

### Spiced Sangria at Botanya

Lighter on the fruit but full of amped-up spices, this red sangria is packed with flavor and not too sweet—it's more of a zingy, cold refresher. The lights are low here, the vibes are high and their sangria is the ideal drink for a long, buzzy evening with friends.

### Sangria de Cava at Importante Bodega Bar

Absolutely everything is swimming in this white sangria: Spanish Verdejo, dry vermouth, banana and apple liqueurs, fresh citrus, house-made triple berry syrup and a cava float. It's a sparkling liquid SweetTarts candy in the best, most balanced way.

### White Sangria at Tazza Kitchen

Ooh, it's peaches and herbs! This excellent sangria blanca pushes a triple-threat liqueur bomb: white rum, peach brandy and triple sec. Orange, lemon and basil make for a fresh sip that's more spirited than sweet.

### Rotating Sangrias at TBT El Gallo

Rotating selections of Spanish and Mexican red and white wines are flavored with fresh local and tropical fruits, plus triple sec and tequila. TBT's sangria offerings change frequently, but they always marry well with the menu's bold flavors. —Bird Cox





PURVEYOR

## Commonwealth Crackers

**HISTORY:** Founded earlier this year, Commonwealth Crackers is a new presence on the local snack scene. At the forefront of the family-owned business are Spencer Gorsline and his mother, Jen Gorsline, also the namesake and founder of Bundt bakery Cakes by Jen. An economics major at the University of Virginia, Spencer moved home after graduation and started collaborating with his mother. Looking to capitalize on the following she had established in 15 years of operating Cakes by Jen while avoiding the shelf life and shipping constraints associated with cakes, the pair created a nostalgic twist on a savory Southern staple: cheese straws. Spencer says, "It's almost like the intersection between a Dot's pretzel and a Cheez-It."



**SPECIALTY:** Commonwealth Crackers currently offers its signature flavor of classic cocktail crackers but plans to expand its product line with new options including hot honey barbecue and All Dressed.

**PRODUCTION:** For each container sold, 1.23% of sales is donated to local hunger relief charity Feed More. "That's a super small percentage, but it is able to drive a lot of meals," Spencer says. "Roughly seven to 10 units of our crackers that we sell provides four meals."

**BUY:** Yellow Umbrella Provisions, Supper Club, Libbie Market and shops listed on Instagram at @commonwealthcrackers. —Eileen Mellon

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INSIDER

## A BIG DILL

Richmond was once home to one of the most beloved briny brands in the world *By Lauren Vincelli*

**J**uly is National Pickle Appreciation Month. Though brands like Claussen, Grillo's and Mt. Olive are recognizable household names today, about 150 years ago, a Richmond-based company sold some of the country's most popular pickles.

Renowned for its sweet, savory and piquant flavors, Pin Money Pickles was the creation of Ellen Kidd (born Ellen Gertrude Tompkins in 1852). She started making pickles as a teenager in the late 1860s and was at the company's helm for over six decades, with Pin Money Pickles becoming a staple at grocers and restaurants across the globe.

Kidd was born into Richmond's aristocratic society. Her father, Edmund W. Tompkins, was a politician and an import-

er of luxury goods including Champagne, cognac, English cheese, French mustard, coffee, vinegar and pickles. The Tompkins family held enslaved people and employed servants, whose labor contributed to the family's financial status and success.

Kidd shared her father's business sense and penchant for progressive political organizing. She was a founding member of the League of Equal Suffrage and the Virginia League of Women Voters, and an officer in several women's clubs and societies. Active in real estate and philanthropy, she was the first woman ever to manage a major food manufacturing company and the first female member of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.

Pickles were her passion from a young age. When Kidd was 16, she made pickles

with her grandmother, Fanny Taylor Tompkins, using a recipe from Kidd's great-grandmother, Ann Day Taylor. Soon, Kidd began making her own pickles and experimenting with different ingredients and techniques. She entered them in state fairs, winning numerous awards, and they became beloved by friends and neighbors. Some even insisted on paying for them, encouraging Kidd to take the funds for "pin money." An archaic term, pin money refers to funds given to or earned by young women that could be spent on small items. The name stuck, and Kidd formally founded Pin Money Pickles.

In 1872, Kidd married her late sister's widower, John Boulware Kidd. He left his job to work as a Pin Money Pickles salesman, traveling across the country and offering samples to prospective clients. Initially, Kidd made the pickles in a large copper kettle on the stove, but in 1898, she built a factory directly behind her home at 706 E. Leigh St. Her husband died in 1910, and that same year, she built a five-story factory on Marshall Street that allowed her to produce 1,000 barrels of pickles a day.

Legend has it that soon after the company started, Kidd received an order for five barrels of pickles from a merchant. Thinking it was a mistake, she sent five gallons. The merchant sent a reply along the lines of, "Madam! I said five barrels. FIVE BARRELS! I could eat five gallons myself!" The endorsement was used in marketing for years.

The company offered free samples by mail, BOGO coupons and a money-back guarantee in the newspaper. The pickles came in uniquely shaped bottles that are collector's items today. Beyond having them stand out on grocery shelves, Kidd's strategy was to land her pickles in places frequented by travelers so they could take the product worldwide. By the 1900s, they were on the menus at hundreds of hotels, restaurants, steamships, railroad dining cars and deli counters and were sold internationally as far away as Australia.



Pin Money Pickles was considered a premium brand. The company offered over two dozen classic and unusual products, including sweet mixed pickles, chow chow, martynia, hot pepper relish, golden pickled cauliflower, cucumber chips, peaches, gherkins of various sizes and flavors, cocktail onions, walnuts, pickled watermelon rinds and cubes, baby melons, and (one of their biggest sellers) West India burr gherkins. Salty, sour, sweet and savory — there was something for everyone.

Kidd insisted on using top-quality ingredients, salts and spices and only wood-aged cider vinegar from Virginia apples. The company commissioned 150 farms in neighboring counties to grow produce, including special cucumber varieties for Pin Money, and set up on-site brining stations to kick-start the production process and keep the pickles crisp.

After decades of successful operations, in 1927 Kidd retired to the Shenandoah Apartments at 501 N. Allen Ave. She remained president of the company until her death in 1932. Pin Money Pickles moved to Gloucester after being purchased by Stewart Wilson (S & G Wilson Salad Dressing) in the 1950s. The John E. Cain Company bought the business in the early '60s, offering limited varieties of Pin Money Pickles before absorbing the brand into Cain's Pickles in the 1970s.

The brand was briefly revived in 2019 by Michael Hild, a Richmond developer who opened The Butterbean Market and Cafe and other food and beverage businesses in Manchester, but operations stalled after Hild was charged with and later convicted of felony fraud.

The exact recipe for Pin Money Pickles is unknown, but documents in Kidd's collection of papers at the Library of Virginia suggest it was a slow, involved process that took several weeks — as one brochure said, "Twentieth century 'hurry-up' methods cannot be used." <sup>13</sup>

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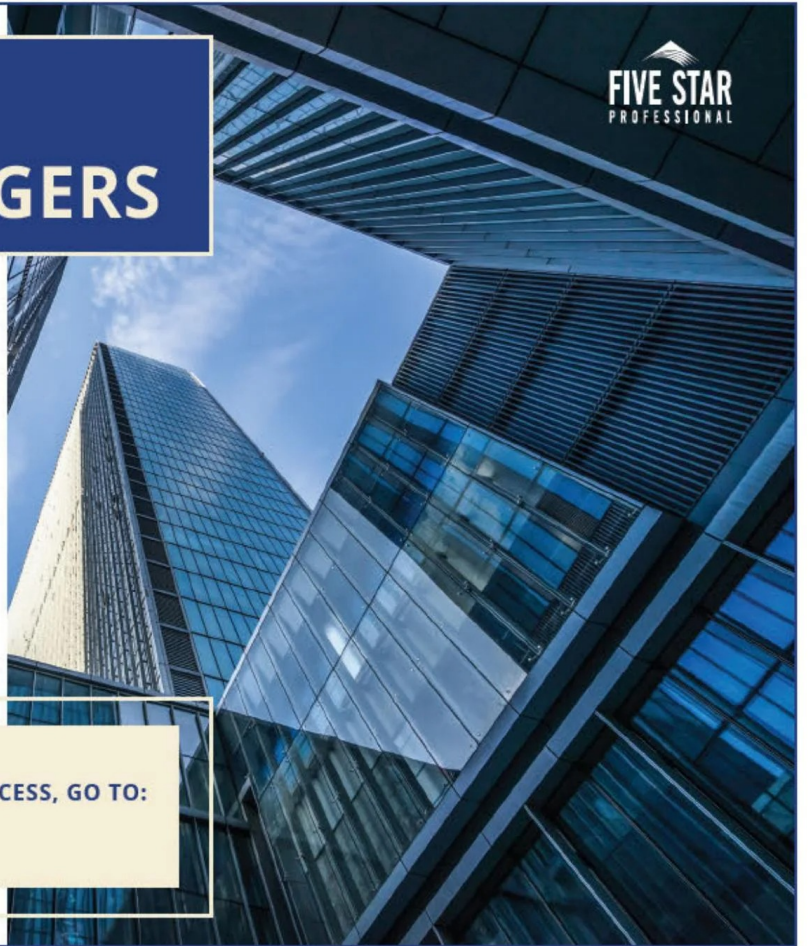
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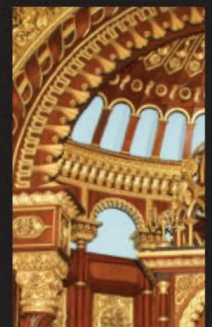
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## PARTING SHOT



As part of tours of the Chatsworth School Museum in Varina on June 7 and 8 that were also given by Gail Sailes, volunteer organizer Stephenne Belle (bottom right) points to the name Odell Crawley scratched into a desk; the student appears on the far right of a 1948 class photograph.



See more photos taken around Richmond at [instagram.com/richmondmag](https://www.instagram.com/richmondmag).

**THE CHATSWORTH SCHOOL MUSEUM**, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1915 in the Antioch community of Varina, held an open house on June 7 and 8 to celebrate its legacy and unveil a plaque commemorating its history.

The school taught Black first through fourth graders during the age of public school segregation. According to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Julius Rosenwald of Sears, Roebuck and Company contributed a matching grant to fund its construction before he established his Rosenwald Fund in 1917.

Henrico County closed the school in 1956 as it replaced one- and two-room schoolhouses. It sat abandoned until Antioch Baptist Church acquired the building and land in 2001 to restore its vernacular Classical Revival-style structure. Work was completed in 2018; it was added to state and national landmark registers in 2022. —Jay Paul

JAY PAUL





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